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Nick Carter Stories

THE EDGE OF A CRIME
OR
NICK CARTER'S TRAIL OF MERCY

NICK CARTER STORIES

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THE EDGE OF A CRIME;

Or, NICK CARTER'S TRAIL OF MERCY.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

STOLEN JEWELS.

"This is the house, Danny!"

"All right, chief!"

"Drive right into the gateway and stop at the main entrance."

"Looks as if there might be a party," remarked Danny Maloney, chauffeur for the famous detective, Nick Carter, as he turned the machine. "Every window seems to be lighted up."

"I don't think there is a party," returned his employer. "But never mind. When we get to the front door, just stay there till I come out."

"I understand."

The big, high-powered automobile held only Nick Carter and Danny Maloney, the chauffeur, and it had raced up from New York City to this quiet mansion, standing in the midst of its spacious grounds, overlooking Long Island Sound, at a speed which only a person who had influence with the police would have dared.

The grating of brakes, as the car came to a halt at the foot of the stone steps brought a liveried servant to the door.

"Is that Mr. Carter?"

"Yes," was the brief reply.

The detective jumped out and was at the top before the quaking butler could get out to the porch.

"I'm glad you've come, Mr. Carter. Mr. Reed has been in a tearing rage ever since last night, and he's been asking every ten minutes for the last two hours whether you had come."

"Where is Mr. Reed?" asked Nick, taking no notice of what the man had said about that gentleman's anger.

"He is in the library. Shall I announce you?"

"Not necessary. I will go right in if you show me where the library is. Why is the house all lighted up?"

"Mr. Reed's orders," was the reply, accompanied by a slight shake of the head, as if the butler disclaimed all responsibility for the extravagance.

Nick Carter smiled. He had met Mr. Stephen Reed before, and he knew that the old millionaire was a man of notions, which he would carry out in spite of any opposition when he made up his mind.

Through the great hall, lined with valuable paintings and encumbered with statuary, dummies in medieval armor, and other indications that its owner was a collector of old-world relics—with the means to gratify his tastes—the servant led Nick Carter.

Throwing open a door, the butler announced impassively: "Mr. Nicholas Carter!" and stood back to permit the detective to walk in.

A man who was somewhere in his sixties, judging by his appearance, and who, in his evening clothes, looked slim to gauntness, got up from his easy-chair and advanced with a frown.

"Good evening, Carter! I hoped you would get here before this."

He waved to the servant to go. Then, in the light of the cluster of electric lamps that depended from the ceiling in the handsomely furnished room, showed that his face was cadaverous and that dark eyes burned fiercely in very deep sockets.

That he was laboring under violent stress of emotion was apparent at a glance. Not only did his face show this, but the clenching and unclenching of his long white fingers indicated that he was feverish with nervousness.

"I came as soon as I could," returned Nick, with a slight shrug. "I got your telegram late this afternoon, when I returned home from out of town, and as soon as I could arrange some other urgent business, I came."

"H'm!" grunted Stephen Reed.

"You did not tell my assistant over the telephone what you wanted," the detective reminded him.

"I never talk over the telephone more than I can help, and then only to principals," snorted the millionaire. "I only told the person at the other end of the wire——"

"My confidential assistant, Chickering Carter," put in Nick.

"H'm! Well, I told him I wanted to see you as soon as possible."

"I came as soon as I could, because I did not want the man who has stolen the Abdul Hamid pearls to get too far away before we went after him."

Stephen Reed started and his lank jaw fell open in astonishment.

"Why, how did you know what I wanted you for?" he stammered.

Nick Carter smiled.

"My dear sir, it wasn't difficult for me to arrive at that conclusion. A most ordinary process of deduction would lead me to that."

"I'm blessed if I can see it."

"And yet it is very simple," returned the detective, still smiling. "You bought these famous pearls, that were formerly in the collection of Sultan Abdul Hamid, only yesterday."

"How did you know that?"

"Because I was commissioned to buy them for a client of mine if I could get them for twenty-five thousand dollars. You outbid me by five thousand, and they went to you."

"I don't see why the transaction should have been made public," grumbled Stephen Reed.

"It is difficult to keep the sale of jewels as well known as those from being known to collectors and dealers. Anyhow, I knew you had them. I also knew that you brought them out here at once, in your own car. That was rather an indiscreet thing to do, if you will allow me to say so, considering that you had to travel over a lonely road."

"I can always take care of my own," snarled Stephen Reed.

Nick Carter shrugged, and the millionaire hastened to add:

"That is, while I am awake and have reason to fear any risks. There was no danger of their being taken from me as I came home. The robbery was committed afterward, in the night, while I was in bed."

"That is what I supposed. Will you give me the details?"

"Very well," replied the millionaire wearily. "I've already gone over it once with an officer from the town here. But I don't think he can make much of it."

There was a knock at the door, and on Stephen Reed growling a "Come in!" a man in police uniform, whose stripes showed that he was a lieutenant, came in and looked rather resentfully at Carter.

"This is Lieutenant Crown," grunted Reed. "What have you found out, lieutenant?"

The policeman was a ponderous individual, who spoke slowly and wheezily from the lower part of his chest, and seemed to be oppressed by his own official dignity.

"I have several clews, Mr. Reed," he answered. "But until I trace a certain man, I would rather not say anything."

Nick Carter listened to this noncommittal statement carelessly. Then he turned his back on the lieutenant and asked Stephen Reed to tell him all he could about the case.

"That won't be much," replied the millionaire, seating himself, while Carter took a chair by him at the big table. "I went to bed at ten o'clock, after placing the Abdul Hamid pearls in the safe in my bedroom, with other jewelry that I have in the house."

"You don't usually keep much of it here, do you?" asked the detective.

"No. As you are aware, I am a collector of rare jewels, and I have a quantity of them. Generally they are all in my safe-deposit vault at the bank. But it happens that I brought about fifty thousand dollars' worth from the vault only yesterday, intending to have the settings looked over by the jeweler I always employ for that work."

"And you lost that jewelry, too, as well as the pearls?"

"All of it. Eighty thousand dollars' worth, at least—although I would not accept twice that sum."

"Bill Perry came down from Sing Sing three days ago," interpolated Lieutenant Crown sagely. "This looks like one of his jobs."

"Perhaps. But Bill Perry did not do it," said Nick, without looking around.

"How do you know?" snapped Crown.

"He was shot dead in the back room of a saloon on the very night he got to New York," was the detective's short reply. "What happened after you went to bed, Mr. Reed? Did you hear or see anything suspicious?"

"Well, yes. I had been asleep some time, I think, when I was awakened by the report of a gun that seemed to be ringing in my ears even when I started up in bed. I thought at once of the jewels. I guess I'd been dreaming about them."

"Very likely," remarked Nick Carter.

"I keep a lamp burning in my room all night—but very low. It enabled me to see the safe, however, and I perceived at once that the door was open."

"Does any one sleep near you in the house?"

"No. I occupy the room my father used during his lifetime, and it is in the old wing of the building. As I have never married, but have always lived alone, except for the servants, I have been off there by myself ever since my father's death."

"Better if you had a valet sleeping within call, I should say," observed the detective dryly.

"I think so myself now," agreed Stephen Reed. "But it is too late. I jumped out of bed and ran to the safe. The inner steel drawer, as well as the outer door, was open, and all my jewels were gone!"

"You're quite sure, I suppose?" put in Lieutenant Crown solemnly.

"Of course I'm sure," snarled the old man. "Don't you think I can see whether a drawer is empty or not?"

"The inner drawer was locked when you went to bed?" asked Carter.

"Yes, and the key was in my waistcoat pocket. The waistcoat hung on a chair by the side of my bed. I found it there after I had looked at the safe. Of course

I could not tell whether it had been used in the night or not."

"Supposing that it had been used, the thief had carefully put it back?"

"Yes."

"What next?"

"I was in my pajamas, but I put on a pair of slippers and rushed downstairs to the other part of the house. A cold breeze blew in from a back door. Outside of it I saw my man—my valet—lying on the lawn, half dressed, and senseless. I lifted him up and found a large lump on his head. He had been knocked down by some heavy implement."

"Where is your man?"

"I can call him if you want him. But he hasn't felt well all day, and I told him he could loaf about, and let Smithers, the butler, wait on me. It was Smithers who let you in."

"What is your valet's story?" asked Nick. "Perhaps I can get it from you without having to question him."

"He says he was awakened by a noise as if a door were being forced open. He thought he must be mistaken, so he lay in bed till, later, he was sure he heard somebody in the hall. He slipped into some clothes and got to the hall below in time to see a man going out of the back door."

"Well?"

"Perkins—that's the valet's name—is a brave sort of chap. So he bolted through the back door after the burglar. He had only just got there, when the man turned and fired a shot. It missed, and Perkins kept right on."

"Good for Perkins!" exclaimed Nick.

"Then the burglar stopped, waited till Perkins got to him, and banged away at him with the butt of his revolver."

"You mean the burglar banged Perkins?"

"Yes. He landed on the poor fellow so hard that he fell in a heap, unconscious. It was soon afterward that I came down and found Perkins. When the servants came, we carried him inside and brought him around, with brandy and so forth."

Nick Carter nodded, and for a few seconds was silent, as he turned over in his mind what he had been told, while Lieutenant Crown watched him with a saturnine expression on his fat face.

"You have no idea who the burglar was, of course, nor whether he had pals with him?" asked Nick, at last.

"No."

"How did he come here, do you think—walk?"

"No. By the way, that is a point I forgot," returned Stephen Reed. "Perkins was insensible—or nearly so, as he lay on the grass. But he feels sure he heard a motor car driving away down the road in the distance. Of course, that might not have been anything to do with the burglary."

"Of course not."

"There are many motor cars passing my house day and night, because this is the main road to New York. Still, this car might have been used by the thief," added Stephen Reed.

"That is true. So it might," agreed Nick Carter.

CHAPTER II.

THE ACCUSATION.

For a minute or two Nick stood considering. Then, having mapped out in his mind his plan of action, he turned to Stephen Reed and spoke in a brisk tone.

"Will you show me the window—or door—by which you think the thief got in?"

"It was a window. We found it open afterward," was the old man's response. "It belongs to a room that nobody goes into in these times. In my father's time it was sometimes used as a bedchamber when there was a lot of company. I don't have company myself."

He sniffed at the bare idea of being bothered with a lot of people in the house. He was rather a dry old stick, was Stephen Reed.

"There is nothing to be seen there," growled Lieutenant Crown. "Just a few blurred footprints—that's all."

"Blurred footprints have sometimes led a man to prison," remarked Nick Carter.

"I'll show you the room, Carter," offered the old millionaire, with a pathetic eagerness. "The loss I have sustained is very heavy—more than I have said. That is why I was so anxious to have you come."

He led the way into a rear hall, and so to a door in a dark corner. The place was evidently used as a lumber room. The window was still wide open.

After examining the frame of the sash and noting how the catch had been thrust aside, evidently by a knife blade, Nick Carter went through the opening and to the ground underneath.

"Stay where you are, please," he called up to the lieutenant, who was about to follow. "There has been enough trampling out here already."

Lieutenant Crown did not like this, but he obeyed, because Nick Carter was the sort of man who would not allow anything else.

"What have you found?" asked Stephen Reed, after a minute or so.

"I'll tell you later."

Nick took a flash light and a strong magnifying glass from his pockets. With these he examined the ground carefully. Now and then he dropped to his knees, as he came across some spot that did not quite satisfy him.

He kept this up for twenty minutes. Then he thrust the glass and flash back in their respective pockets and climbed back into the room.

"Get anything new?" asked Lieutenant Crown, rather sneeringly.

The detective did not answer. He felt that he had no time to bother with the rather incompetent lieutenant just then. Turning to Stephen Reed, he asked him to lead the way to his bedroom.

"The thief evidently came in this way, went to your bedroom, and afterward let himself out at the back door. We'll follow his trail, if we can."

"There is nothing going to help you in the bedroom," interposed Crown. "I looked it over. The thief must have found the outer door of the safe a little way open——"

"Didn't you shut it the night before?" jerked Nick at the millionaire.

"I thought I did," replied Reed. "But it seems now as if I must have made a mistake. There are no indications that the door was opened by violence. So I couldn't have secured it."

"Huh!" ejaculated the detective. "We'll look at the safe, anyhow."

From the room they went through the narrow hall, thence to the great hall that ran through the house from back to front, and then to another door that concealed a rear staircase.

"You think he came this way, instead of going by the main staircase?" queried Nick.

"Yes. This door was found open afterward," replied the millionaire. "It leads to the old part of the building. The room I have was my father's after my mother died. As I have told you, I have slept in it since his death."

The room was comfortable enough, though simply furnished. The only unusual feature was the presence of the large safe, which stood opposite the foot of the bed.

It was an old-fashioned affair, and though the combination lock was of the same general pattern as those in use to-day, it did not look as if it could repel the attack of even a fourth-rate cracksman.

"I don't know so much about this safe having been left open the night before," was Nick Carter's mental remark, as he stooped in front of the big iron door. "It would not take long for any of half a dozen safe blowers I know to get in here with a simple turn of the wrist."

The detective's examination of the safe, with his flash lamp and magnifying glass, was a very short one. A glance had shown him about all he wanted to know.

"Can I see you alone, Mr. Reed?" he asked, as he put his lamp and glass away.

"Certainly. Come down to the library."

It did not please Lieutenant Crown to be left out of the conference. But there was no help for it. He knew that he had failed utterly to get any clew to the thief, and that Stephen Reed was not the man to give consideration to anybody who failed to make good.

"Have you a clew, Carter?" asked Mr. Reed, as they stepped into the library and the detective turned the key in the door.

"Several," was the brief reply. "But I must ask you to help me in following the principal one."

"Do you think you can recover my property?" was the excited query of the old man.

Nick Carter held up his hand to quiet the millionaire, if he could. Reed's face had gone purple, and the detective did not like it.

"I am going to try to recover it," answered Nick. "But I should like you to listen to me carefully and answer my questions."

"Go on."

"First, do you keep a large dog loose in the grounds at night?"

"Yes; he is a bull terrier."

"He would not permit a stranger to come to the house after the lights are all out, would he?"

"He would not," answered the millionaire, and his voice had sunk to almost a whisper. "He nearly killed a man who once tried to break in here on a former occasion.

"That's what I had heard," remarked Nick Carter, with a slight smile of satisfaction that the other did not notice. "Now, Mr. Reed, has it occurred to you that the thief must have known his way well about this house to find your room in the dark so easily?"

"Burglars generally know something about the house they intend to rob some time in advance," was Reed's grudging observation.

"True. But there is another thing. The key of the steel drawer inside the safe was in your waistcoat pocket, and the waistcoat hung on a chair near your bed. The thief seems to have gone straight to that waistcoat and taken out the key without disturbing anything. Is not that so?"

"Yes. That is so."

Stephen Reed had sunk back in his large chair and an expression of terror had come into his deep-set eyes, while his mouth opened, as if all the strength had gone out of the muscles of his face.

"You see, Mr. Reed——"

But the millionaire tottered to his feet and shook his head, while his trembling hands motioned to Nick Carter not to say anything more.

"It can't be true!" gasped the old man. "It can't be true!"

He shuffled up and down the room, struggling for breath and occasionally muttering in an undertone. He seemed to have lost all control of himself.

"Mr. Reed!"

The detective took him by the arm and led him to his chair, speaking to him encouragingly the while.

"We will get this matter all fixed up satisfactorily," he promised. "And you shall get back your property—if you will give me your confidence. You need not be afraid to speak. In my profession I hear a great many secrets, but they never leak out. It ought not to be necessary to say that, but perhaps you do not realize altogether what detectives have to do."

"I know—I know," moaned the old man. "But it seems too dreadful to be believed."

"Whom do you suspect?" whispered Nick Carter.

For a moment there was no answer. Stephen Reed had buried his face in his hands, while his shoulders heaved and a choking sob occasionally came from him.

Suddenly he raised his head, and the detective was awe-stricken by the change that had came over his countenance. His eyes glowed fiercely, and his cheeks seemed to have been drawn in by some strong emotion. There was a snarl that drew his lips back from his yellow teeth, and he gave vent to a hissing sound, like that of a wild animal who sees its prey escaping.

"I'll tell you the person I suspect," grated Reed, in low tones.

He was silent for a little while, as if trying to gain control of himself. Then he drew forth a paper from the drawer of the table before him and thrust it toward the detective.

"You will find there a list and description of all the jewelry stolen from me. It is worth from eighty to a hundred thousand dollars."

Nick Carter took the paper and glanced over it. The list had been methodically made out, in the cramped handwriting of the old man himself; and it seemed to be entirely complete.

"You can keep that, Carter. But there is something else. You ask me whom I suspect. There is one person who had the combination of my safe besides myself,

because I trusted him implicitly. He is the only one who knows where I always kept the key of that steel drawer. His photograph is here, on my table."

He took a photograph from a silver frame with an angry twitch and gave it to Nick Carter.

"Your son!" gasped the detective. "Do you mean that you think he is the thief?"

"I know it," groaned the millionaire. "The boy I loved so much—the only individual on earth that I really trusted."

"But why should he do it—even if it is possible that he could be guilty of so despicable a crime?"

"He was my widowed sister's boy, and my adopted son," answered Stephen Reed. "He has always lived with me since my sister died, when this boy was a mere child. Paul has been the pride of my life, and he would have been my heir. Now——"

"Had you quarreled, then?" asked Nick Carter quickly.

Instead of replying to this question, the old man staggered to his feet, his hands clenched above his head. He turned on the detective with a wild glare in his eye.

"Run him down!" he howled. "He deserves no more mercy than the commonest crook. Run him down, and ——"

The vindictive speech was broken off by a choking gurgle, and, before Nick could catch him, he had pitched forward on his face on the floor.

Nick Carter bent over him and unfastened his collar. Then he ran to an electric button at the side of the table and summoned the butler.

"Smithers," he said, when the man appeared, "Mr. Reed is ill. Better telephone for a doctor at once. First, I will help you get him into bed."

The detective stayed until the patient had been made comfortable, and the doctor had said that doubtless he would recover in course of time, but must be kept quiet. Then he went out to his motor car and told Danny Maloney to drive to the town and stop where there was a public telephone.

It did not take him long to get his home, in New York, on the telephone. Chick, his principal assistant, answered the call.

"Is Patsy Garvan there?" asked the detective.

"Yes," was Chick's reply. "He is by my side."

"Very well! There has been a robbery at Mr. Stephen Reed's house—some valuable jewelry taken. You and Patsy go to every pawnbroker's in New York and find out whether any of it has been pawned. Divide the territory between you and make as good time as you can."

"Got a list of the stuff?" asked Chick.

"Yes, here it is."

Slowly and carefully, Nick Carter gave a description of each article that was missing, and made Chick repeat his words, to make sure the list was correct. Then he gave a word portrait of Paul Clayton, the adopted son of Stephen Reed.

"This Paul Clayton may have pawned the jewelry," he explained. "But of that I am not sure. If this young man is the thief, he will be certain to have raised money on at least one of the pieces of jewelry, so as to get away from this part of the country. You and Patsy each take a taxi. Try the bigger pawnbrokers first. Let me know, at the home of Mr. Reed, directly you find out anything."

"All right! Patsy wants to speak to you."

"Go ahead!"

"If we get a flash at this fellow, Paul Clayton, are we to shadow him?" asked Patsy.

"I don't think you are likely to see anything of him," was Nick Carter's reply. "If you do, of course find out where he goes."

"All right! Good-by!"

"I don't like this case," was the detective's inward observation, as he rode back to Stephen Reed's home. "I have never seen Paul Clayton, but I feel sure that, if he is guilty, it is through some circumstances that have not come to me yet."

CHAPTER III.

NICK MAKES TWO PROMISES.

Nick Carter slept at the Reed home that night. It was late when he gave the telephone order to his assistants to go through the pawnshops, and he knew they could not visit many of them before the morning.

Meanwhile, he hoped to get more information from the old millionaire which might help him to find out who really was the thief.

Circumstantial evidence seemed to point to Paul Clayton, the nephew, and adopted son. But the experienced detective knew too well that this kind of evidence is the least to be trusted, and he wanted to get something else, which would put him on more solid ground.

He had visited the millionaire in his room and found that he was improving. Now he was waiting to hear from his two men by telephone before going back to New York.

There was nothing to be done before he learned the news from the pawnshops, and he was enjoying a quiet cigar, while turning over in his mind the various phases of the case.

There was a knock at the door and Smithers came in.

"Miss Lethia Ford to see you, sir," he announced, in his flat, professional tone.

"Ford—Miss Lethia Ford!" muttered Nick. "I don't remember the name."

He nodded to the butler to show the lady in, and arose as a pretty girl, of about twenty years of age, stepped over the threshold and inclined her head in tentative greeting.

The quick perception of the detective told him there were tears in her eyes, and that her well-formed mouth seemed to quiver, although she strove resolutely not to let her feelings show themselves.

"I have no doubt you will be surprised that I have come to you, Mr. Carter," she began, in a low tone, with the suggestion of a sob. "I am a stranger to you."

"Many strangers come to me, Miss Ford," he returned, with the gentle smile that could illumine his strong face when some helpless person appealed to him. "Sit down and tell me what I can do."

She took the chair he placed for her, and sat there, clasping and unclasping her hands in her lap.

"My father is Mr. Tyler Ford. We live in the next house to this one. You can see it through the trees over there," she continued, pointing through a window at the left of the detective.

"Oh, yes," smiled Nick. "I know Mr. Tyler Ford by name, but I did not think of you as his daughter."

It was evident that the girl wanted to say more, but hardly knew how to frame it. The detective turned his eyes away, so as not to embarrass her.

"I have heard about the robbery here," she went on, at last. "In a small place like this news travels quickly. I even heard that you had been sent for, but it was not until I received a letter, about an hour ago, that it seemed as if it might concern me in any way."

"Concern you?"

Nick Carter was on the alert at once, and he looked steadily into Lethia Ford's eyes. Why had not Stephen Reed mentioned this girl if she was possibly connected with the matter? Surely the millionaire must have known.

"I knew that Paul—Mr. Clayton—intended to visit his father night before last. He was to have called on me afterward, but he did not come. Then I got this letter."

She held it out, but drew it back as the detective would have taken it, while an anxious, pleading expression came into her gray eyes.

"Mr. Carter," she faltered, "I have been told that you are always ready to help any one in distress. If this letter has anything to do with the case, will you help me—and Paul? We are engaged to be married," she added simply.

"I promise," he said, and she knew that he meant it.

She gave him the letter, and this is part of what he read, omitting some purely personal passages that were such as any young man might write to the girl he hoped to marry, and which had no bearing on the case that Nick Carter had set himself to work out:

"My uncle, who has always treated me as a son, has paid for my education and has led me to believe I should be his heir, has suddenly turned against me. He tells me that he has invested so much money in jewelry, and must put in so much more, that he can allow me only a small part of the income I have had from him while I am preparing myself for my profession."

"Paul hopes to be admitted to the bar next year," put in the girl.

Nick Carter nodded, and resumed his perusal of the letter. It continued:

"What it means to be abruptly deprived of the means to live—at least, in the way to which you have been accustomed—I never realized till now. This craze of my uncle to collect jewelry for its own sake, and without any desire to use it as an adornment for anybody, is so overmastering with him that he loses all sense of moral obligations. I am desperate, Lethia. Temptations come to us all at some time, and it is not everybody who is strong enough to resist them. Forgive me, Lethia, and try to forget everything about me save that I have loved you more than all else in the world."

With a thoughtful face, Nick Carter handed the letter back to the girl. She took it in silence, watching his inscrutable countenance as if to find there some promise of help to her lover.

Smithers, the imperturbable, floated into the room, holding a telegram on a salver.

"For you, Mr. Carter," he intoned.

The detective took the telegram, and, after a muttered apology to Lethia, tore it open and hastily scanned its contents. They were brief and to the point, as a telegraphic message should be:

"One of the articles pawned in Forty-second by man you describe. Awaiting instructions. CHICK."

Nick Carter glanced pityingly at the girl. But she was sitting with bowed head, and did not notice him.

The message from Chick made it reasonably certain that Paul Clayton, maddened by what he regarded as ill treatment by his adopted father, and disgusted by his spending so much money on jewels, had deliberately opened the safe—which it was easy for him to do, knowing the millionaire's ways—and stolen all the valuables in the steel drawer.

"What do you want me to do?" he asked gently.

The girl started up, and the eagerness with which she heard the great detective ask her what he should do for her made the blood rush to her face in a vivid flush that wonderfully enhanced her beauty.

Nick Carter told himself emphatically that this Paul Clayton was lucky to have won such a lovely sweetheart.

"Do?" The word fairly rang through the room. "What can I ask you to do but to save Paul? People say that you do not know what failure is. Track him down, get the jewels from him, and ask him, for my sake, to go far from New York and start afresh where he is not known. He will be successful. He must! And tell him, Mr. Carter, that I will wait for him."

The loving appeal in this last sentence went straight to the heart of the detective.

"If it is possible to save Paul Clayton, I will do it," he returned, in a voice that was firm with the sincerity of a strong man. "But part of it will depend on himself."

An unexpected interruption made them look toward the door, where Doctor Stanton, who had been attending the millionaire, poked in his head.

"Mr. Carter," he said, "Mr. Reed is much better, and he would like to see you and Miss Ford. He has heard from the servants that Miss Ford is here. You will go?"

"Yes," answered Nick. "At once."

"Thanks!" responded the doctor. "I told him I'd tell you on my way out. Good day!"

The physician, a fussy, elderly man—one of the kind that are always in a hurry—buzzed away from the room door, and a minute later his automobile was seen skimming around the crescent-shaped drive and out of the gateway.

"I cannot imagine what Mr. Reed wants to see me for," mused Lethia. "He has never been a friend of my father's, and he has tried to prevent Paul and me seeing each other. Besides, I did not know that he was aware of my being in the house."

"Well, we will go and see what he wants," smiled Nick Carter. "He is not likely to hurt you—while I am in the room."

They found Stephen Reed much improved as to his physical condition, and full of a strange eagerness, as they approached the bed where he lay.

"Mr. Carter," he began abruptly. "You think my adopted son broke into that safe?"

"I have not said so."

"But you believe it," snapped the old man, while tears

came to his eyes. "So do I. Heaven help me! But I drove him to it. I led him on to believe my money was his. Then, I told him he could expect practically nothing from me, and threw temptation in his way."

"But, Mr. Reed——" broke in Lethia.

"Come closer," interrupted the millionaire, holding out a thin hand to the girl.

She obeyed, and he took her hand, as he looked earnestly into her face and muttered, half to himself:

"Nearly as beautiful as her mother—nearly, nearly!"

"Mr. Reed, have you anything in particular that you want to say to me?" asked Lethia, as if anxious to get away from so painful a scene. "The doctor told me you wanted to see me, and I——"

"My child," exclaimed the old man, "did you ever know that I was once engaged to your mother?"

"Never," she answered unhesitatingly.

"Well, that is not surprising. Who would tell you of it? Who? But it is a fact, and it is by that I must try to make you understand why I behaved as I did to Paul Clayton when he told me he intended to marry you."

"Oh! Then that was the reason," breathed the girl, trying to keep down her agitation. "I don't see why——"

"Of course you don't, unless I told you," he went on. "It was your father, Tyler Ford, who came between us. He married her, and I—well, that was where my life was split upon the rocks. From that time to the present I have always hated people who were really happy. Because of that feeling I decided to disinherit my son if he married you. And, to make him understand how determined I was, I took from him all that I could now. He had no other means, and could not make anything while studying his profession, and I took advantage of it."

The old man fell back, exhausted, and Nick Carter could not keep from his eyes a look of disgust.

"Now, Mr. Carter," went on Stephen Reed, after a pause, "you may wonder what all this leads to."

"I do," responded the detective dryly.

"I want you to find Paul Clayton," said the old man, in low, hoarse tones. "Find him for me—and Lethia."

"Mr. Reed!" exclaimed Lethia. "Do you really mean that?"

The millionaire put out his long, lean hand, and gently stroked her shoulder, as he answered, in broken words:

"My dear, I want to make up for the injury I have done my son—and your mother—as much as I can. Mr. Carter, you will find him?"

"I will, Mr. Reed," was the emphatic reply. "You can depend on that. And I will see that the jewels taken from that safe are returned to you."

"Never mind about the jewels," returned Mr. Reed impatiently. "They do not matter. What I want, at the end of my life, is the affection of somebody, to make up for the emptiness of my existence for all these years."

Fifteen minutes later, Nick Carter, after promising Lethia Ford once more that he would find Paul Clayton, and that he would prove himself a friend of the young man, walked briskly along the drive to the outer gateway.

"I'll tell Danny to speed up the car when I get to the garage," he said to himself. "I have a delicate task before me, and I want to get at it as quickly as possible."

CHAPTER IV.

JOE SYKES.

It was in a rough-looking saloon, not far from the water front of the North River, that two seafaring men, whose dress and general style proclaimed them to be of higher rank than common sailors, forgathered on the evening of the day that Nick Carter had made his promise to Stephen Reed and Lethia Ford.

The two men were in a back room, where it was customary for captains and mates of the merchant marine to sit in sordid state, away from those whose work on a vessel lay forward. They were grunting morosely at each other over their beer.

Lines were carefully drawn at Monroe's saloon, and if a foremast man dared to force himself without invitation into the society of a skipper and a first or second mate, Pat Monroe himself would be likely to throw the presumptuous one out on his head, after first reminding him of his breach of etiquette with a bung starter.

Monroe's had other uses besides furnishing its patrons with the biggest schooner along the water front for five cents," the "5" being twice as large as any letter in the announcement which hung outside the door. It was a place where masters of vessels could generally pick up a few men to complete a crew, no matter where their ship might be bound for.

It might be the China Sea, the Arctic, or some of the pestilential ports of central Asia. It was all one at Monroe's. The able seamen who hung around there were generally "broke," and all they wanted was a berth.

They would "sign on" for a cruise on any old tub or leaky tramp steamer, provided there were a few drinks for them to begin with, and, in addition, perhaps a little advance money to pay their boarding-house bill, so that they could get hold of their personal effects, held severely by the landlord as security.

These out-at-elbows sailors were a reckless lot.

If the ship was unseaworthy, that was the owners' and skipper's lookout. As for the danger there might be in it for the sailor himself, he gave it very little consideration. Happy-go-lucky, devil-may-care, with a chance of going to Davy Jones' locker, instead of into the port intended—that was all in a sailor's day's work, and no one had any kick coming.

The two men over their beer had their heads together, and seemed to be holding a confidential conference about something. Neither looked particularly pleased.

"It's a strange thing I can't get enough men to sail with, Van," observed the older and rather shorter man of the two. "The *Cherokee* has to pull out of this to-night, no matter what kind of crew I have."

"Keep your shirt on," growled the other. "You'll get a crew, captain. I'll see to that."

"You will? Well, I wish you'd begin to do some seeing, Van," was the retort. "I want a man that knows something, if I can get him. Those lime-juicers we have already are lubbers. They may have horse sense enough to bend a cable around a belaying pin or scrape the rust off an anchor, but I don't see one that I'd trust for

a trick at the wheel, unless I stood over him with a rope's end."

Captain Bill Lawton—known along the water front as one of the hardest men to sail with who ever stood on a bridge or cussed his way along a deck—bit off a big chew of black plug tobacco and worked his massive jaws malevolently.

The man he talked to was Van Cross, known throughout the seven seas as "the fighting mate." He was said to be the only mate who put into New York with the offhand ability to lift two one-hundred-and-seventy five-pound men from the deck and knock their heads together till they dropped unconscious, and he was ruthless in proportion to his muscular strength.

Van Cross had not yet lived down the story of a man who had disappeared overboard one dark night off Sandy Hook. In the log it had been plainly stated that the lost one had been swept into the sea by the chain of a derrick which had broken loose. But there had been plenty of men who had served with Cross to comment in whispers on the size and weight of the mate's fist.

Curiously enough, any seaman who ever had sailed with Van Cross had a habit of whispering when they mentioned his name or referred to his doings.

"Say, cap'!. What's the prospects?" suddenly cried a hoarse voice at the door.

The owner of the voice was a well-built man, in the rough clothes of a merchant sailor that had seen much service, including a ragged blue jersey and a cap pulled well down over his eyes. His untrimmed beard and mustache made him look like a hobo.

Obviously he had been drinking, for he reeled across the room and his eyes had a vacant stare.

"Who are you?" demanded Captain Lawton savagely.

"Joe Sykes!" was the prompt reply.

"What do you want?"

"To ship with you. I'm a sailorman, and I heard you hadn't got your full crew."

Captain Bill Lawton looked over the stranger appraisingly. What he saw seemed to satisfy him.

"Know anything about steamers?" asked the captain gruffly.

"Sure! I've sailed on some of the worst old teakettles that ever took a chance. That's why I'm willing to go with you on the *Cherokee*."

"Who told you I wanted men?" snapped Bill Lawton.

"I heard it from three or four parties. But I'll tell you, captain," he added, in a confidential tone, as he drew nearer to the skipper, "if you would like to know just how it was. A shipmate of mine that I came across in a saloon over there," jerking his thumb vaguely over his shoulder, "bet me five dollars I wouldn't dare to sail on your boat. I'm to pay him when I come back."

"What are you talking about?"

"That's what, captain," hiccuped the stranger, as he lurched forward on his toes, but balanced back on his heels before he landed in Captain Bill Lawton's stomach. "He said your ship was one of these little hells afloat that may blow up or go down before they reach port, but that are always full of brimstone, anyhow."

"Have a drink?" suddenly interrupted the captain.

"Of course I'll have a drink," assented the man readily. "But that isn't what I was going to say."

"Whisky!" snarled the captain to the waiter who had come in response to the banging of his horny knuckles on the table. "Three drinks!"

"Who's your friend?" asked the sailor, nodding toward Van Cross, and steadying himself by the edge of the table as he did so. "Maybe I might have done better by going with him."

"He's my first mate, Mr. Cross," explained Captain Lawton briefly. "Here are the drinks."

He pushed the bottle of whisky that had been brought in, with the three glasses, and all raised the glasses to their lips, putting them down afterward with an appreciative smack.

If anybody else had been there, watching, he might have wondered that Joe Sykes did not drink his liquor with the others. Instead, he slyly poured it into a cuspidor at his side. Such a waste of whisky by a man who seemed to prize it so highly was peculiar, to say the least.

"What was your last ship?" suddenly demanded Van Cross.

Joe Sykes hesitated, and the burly mate snorted scornfully.

"I don't believe you had any ship," grunted Cross. "You don't act like a real sailorman to me. Hows'ever, I bet I'll knock something into you when you are on the *Cherokee*. Do you get that, sonny?"

He dropped a heavy hand on Sykes' shoulder and gave him a shake, with an ugly grin.

Sykes swung around indignantly, and pushed the mate's hand away.

"Keep your dirty paws off me," he commanded.

"Hello!" exclaimed Cross, with a menacing chuckle. "What's this? One of the Astorbilts in disguise? Well, I've met 'em like that before. I guess I'll hand him my visiting card."

He turned back the cuffs of his pea-jacket and pushed his hat off his brow, as he "set" himself in front of Sykes and put up his great fists in a posture of pugilistic attack.

The seedy Sykes gazed at him out of the corner of his eye, and it might have been noted that the drunken leer which had distinguished him when he first surged into the room had given way to a keen look that lighted up his whole face.

He was watching every move of Van Cross, but without appearing to give any of them much attention.

The captain saw more of Sykes' face than did the angry mate, and he whispered into Van Cross' ear quickly:

"Cut that out, Van! It won't do any good!"

But the advice was unheeded.

With an oath the mate swung both fists at the ragged stranger, who was leaning carelessly against the table.

The blows were delivered scientifically enough—one, two!

If they had landed on the stranger's jaw, as was intended, they must have sent him crashing to the floor, probably unconscious.

But—they didn't land!

As if he were actuated by a strong spring that ran all through him, the limp and half-drunken Sykes straightened up, dodged the mate's fists, and, like light-

ning, sent in a swat between the eyes of the big man that caused him to reel backward right across the room.

Van Cross brought up with a bang against the wall—winded, disgruntled, and decidedly astonished.

CHAPTER V.

NICK RECOGNIZES A PASSENGER.

"What's broke loose in here?" demanded the hoarse voice of Pat Monroe, as he came rushing in from the bar. "Get outside if you want to fight. I don't allow nothin' like that here!"

Monroe was a husky fellow, and though he was carefully groomed, with a clean white shirt, white waistcoat, a heavy gold chain across his stomach, and a large diamond on one of the puffy fingers of his red left hand, he was obviously ready to take part instantly in any "rough-house" that might be inaugurated on his premises.

"It's all right, Monroe!" protested Captain Bill Lawton. "Don't worry! Just a little argeyment. Not enough to bring the cops. I'll answer for that."

"Well, cap!" responded Monroe reluctantly. "Of course, if you say so, why——"

Captain Bill Lawton was an important personage at Monroe's, and the proprietor had no particular objection to a man being knocked down so long as it did not bring the police and perhaps jeopardize his license.

Joe Sykes, the wastrel, who had given the big mate such an unlooked-for jolt, stood waiting. His head was bent a little forward, and his eyes flashed curiously. Somehow, he did not seem to be drunk now.

For a moment or two the mate stood against the wall, tenderly feeling the spot between his eyes where the fist of his adversary had struck. Then he stood up straight and glared over at this ragged sailor who had dared to send in what the mate told himself was only a "lucky" blow, landed when he was not looking.

One thing Van Cross had learned, however. That was that the stranger knew something of the art of boxing, and was not to be rushed to defeat without due care.

So Cross came forward slowly, looking for an opening, and prepared to side-step if it should be necessary.

Joe Sykes permitted the mate to come halfway across the room. Then, just as his assailant was ready to send in a left swing, he leaped forward, beat down Cross' guard with his right, and reached the point of the jaw with his left.

Van Cross staggered, his knees sagged, and down he went in a crumpled heap.

"Put him to sleep, by ginger!" burst out from Captain Lawton. "I don't believe I could have done it better myself."

He held out his grimy hand to the victor, and Sykes took it in a grasp that was as strong as the captain's, although his hand was singularly soft for one who had been used to the hard labor of a common sailor.

"When do we sail?" asked Sykes carelessly.

"In an hour, now that I have enough men to go with. But I wish I had at least a couple more."

"There's two of my mates a couple of blocks away," replied Sykes. "Want 'em?"

"I'd like to see them," replied Lawton.

"I'll go and fetch them if you like."

Captain Lawton hesitated.

"You don't mean to jump me—do you? It wouldn't be healthy for you if you did. I'd stay right here till I'd rounded you up, and—well, I don't think you'd want to sail with anybody else for six months, anyhow."

"Don't get that into your head, cap," replied Sykes, grinning. "I'm too glad to have a ship to do anything like that. I'll be back in ten minutes at the outside, with my two mates, and then you can take us all aboard as soon as you're ready."

"All right! I reckon you're on the square, maybe. Get back, quick. Tell your men it will be a good cruise, with fine grub and right treatment."

He waved Sykes away, and went over to his fallen mate, to help Pat Monroe bring him around to his senses.

Joe Sykes reeled out of the saloon—seemingly very drunk again—till he got into the darkness on the sidewalk. Then he braced up and walked swiftly away.

His step was marvelously like that of Nick Carter, the famous detective.

It was not to a saloon he went, but to a wharf, where the steamer *Cherokee* was warped into a slip, with a gangplank out.

As he got to the wharf, two men came out of the shadow and walked over to him. They were the two assistants of Nick Carter.

"Hello, chief! Did you find out anything?"

"Yes, Chick! I've shipped on the steamer under the name of Joe Sykes," was the guarded reply. "You and Patsy can come, too. I've been sent to fetch you."

"Gee! That's good," broke in the other young man, who, of course, was Patsy Garvan. "I know this Paul Clayton is aboard. But it gets me to decide how we're going to handle the case."

"You'll find out in due course, Patsy," replied Nick Carter—for it is hardly necessary to say that Joe Sykes was really the eminent detective. "But don't talk when once you get aboard."

"I believe he has the loot right with him," put in Chick. "He pawned a ring up there in Forty-second Street. But that seemed to be all, from all I could find out. And he took that one right off his finger."

"H'm!" muttered Nick. "I heard that he always has worn a valuable diamond solitaire. It may be that he did not dispose of any of Stephen Reed's jewelry, after all."

"If he didn't, he has it with him," declared Patsy. "We saw him carrying a traveling bag and a suit case when he went up the gangplank this afternoon."

"Well, that will do," interrupted Nick Carter. "Remember, you are just common sailors, and you've got to use all you know about that sort of work perhaps till we get to Porto Rico."

"Is that where we're going?" asked Chick.

"Yes. I heard that before I went into the saloon after Captain Lawton. We sail straight for San Juan."

"Couldn't we get this jewelry from Clayton now, before the ship sails?" suggested Chick. "It looks like a lot of work to go to Porto Rico after a man who could just as well be taken in New York."

"But he could not be taken in New York," corrected Nick Carter. "We cannot get on this steamer except as members of the crew."

"Why not go as a detective, chief? You are not afraid

of anything they can do to you on the ship—especially with Chick and me behind you," declared Patsy.

"I have several reasons for not doing so, Patsy," replied Nick. "One is that I want to get the property without having to cause the arrest of the young man."

"Gee! I suppose you know why," grumbled Patsy Garvan. "I don't."

"It's his sweetheart, Patsy," suggested Chick. "Ain't that so, chief?"

"You are right, Chick," smiled Nick Carter, and in a gentle tone. "It is his sweetheart. For her sake, and also for his own, I want to save Paul Clayton. At the same time, I have to recover this eighty thousand dollars' worth of jewelry for Stephen Reed. I'm glad to see you have both got into toggery that makes you look like sailors. But you want to be careful that the crew of the *Cherokee* doesn't get suspicious."

"Sure!" assented Patsy. "From what I've seen of them, they're a hard bunch, for fair."

The detective and his two assistants left the wharf and made their way to Monroe's saloon.

As they got near, Nick Carter relaxed into the slouching walk of Joe Sykes, and by the time he was again in the back room, where Captain Lawton and Van Cross, the mate, sat at a table, waiting, he was apparently as drunk as when he had left.

It did not take long for Captain Lawton to decide that he would take the two men brought to him by Joe Sykes.

Producing some blank shipping articles of agreement from his pocket, he filled them up and passed them to his new men to sign.

When they were signed, he glanced at the name on the bottom of each one in turn, and muttered:

"Joseph Sykes, John Chick, and Patrick Garvan, eh? All right! They are easy names to remember. I never heard them before, but I won't forget them now."

"I'll bet you won't," observed Patsy, under his breath.

Nick Carter had told his two assistants to use the names given. He was satisfied that Captain Bill Lawton never had heard of Patsy or Chick as members of his official family.

As for himself, his disguise would serve him well. The captain had probably heard of Nick Carter, but there was no reason to suppose he had the slightest suspicion that this boozy Joe Sykes was the world-renowned detective.

Van Cross took no particular notice of the three new sailors. He had been properly trimmed by the supposed Sykes, and was not anxious for any more battling with him—just then.

When they should be aboard the ship it would be different. There the first mate is a despot, especially on a tramp steamer, with a skipper like Captain Lawton.

They all marched to the wharf, and Nick Carter followed the captain up the gangplank. Chick and Patsy came next, and Van Cross brought up the rear.

They were received by a hangdog-looking fellow, short and squat, with a pair of shoulders as square as a barn door. His hands were very large, and his arms were so long that they hung at his sides like those of an orang-utan.

This creature was the bos'n. His name was Clegg, and he was as great a terror as the mate himself.

"Who's his whiskers?" asked Clegg, as his bleary eyes fell on Nick Carter. "I see he's brought his souse aboard with him."

"He's a new hand," replied Captain Lawton, with dignity. "And, look here, Clegg! Don't forget to call me 'sir' when you speak to me."

"Aye, aye, sir," grunted Clegg.

There was a sneer in his tone, which the captain might have noticed if he had not been drinking for a few hours.

Clegg spat over the side and rubbed his two hands together.

"What'll I do with these new men? I suppose all three belong to the crew, don't they?"

"I can do my work," put in Nick Carter. "So can my shipmates, here."

"Oh, is that so? Well, I'll——"

Clegg stepped forward as if to try conclusions with the detective at once. But Van Cross, with a slight grin, put his hand on Clegg's shoulder and shoved him out of the way unceremoniously.

"That will do you, bos'n. We've got to get this old tub out of here. If you want to lick any of the crew, do it when we are out of New York harbor. Get me?"

Bos'n Clegg swallowed hard. But the tide would not hold good forever, and they wanted to get out before it turned. There would be plenty of time to attend to this fresh roustabout later.

"Get for'ard, all of yer," he ordered. "Lend a hand with the cable!"

Nick obeyed, with Chick and Patsy following.

It was only by the exercise of all his will power that Patsy refrained from hurling himself upon the ape-like bos'n, regardless of consequences. The idea of an insignificant fellow like Clegg presuming to be insolent to Nick Carter was almost too much for Patsy Garvan's digestion.

Nick Carter gave him a warning frown and then looked away. Patsy understood the glance, and resolutely thrust the bos'n from his mind.

As the three new hands made their way forward, a tall man, who was leaning over the bulwark and watching the men on the wharf handling the ropes that secured the steamer, gave Nick Carter a look, and instantly returned to his contemplation of the wharf.

Patsy stepped close to his chief and whispered:

"Did you see him?"

"Yes," answered Nick. "It is John Garrison Rayne. He has grown a mustache and he has a gray wig. But I know him."

"What are we going to do about it?" asked Chick. "What do you suppose he is doing on this ship?"

"He's heard of the Stephen Reed robbery, I should say," was Nick Carter's reply. "But he won't try anything now that he knows I am aboard. At least, I don't think so."

"He has finished that two years you got for him at Sing Sing?" queried Patsy.

"Three months ago. I did not know he was in New York, however. I heard he went to the other side. I suppose Europe was too hot for him. Well, we must keep an eye on him. But don't let him know we've recognized him. That will give us a chance to see what he's after."

Nick Carter whispered this hurriedly, but earnestly, to his two assistants. Then he tackled the cable, as he had

been ordered by Clegg, and, with Chick and Patsy both helping, the *Cherokee* had soon cast off and was backing out into the river, preparatory to her voyage down the coast to Porto Rico.

Meanwhile, John Garrison Rayne—looking like an elderly United States senator, but known as one of the most accomplished crooks in America, and also with a European criminal record which had given work to the police of half a dozen capitals on the other side of the Atlantic—grinned wolfishly.

"So, there's my friend Carter, posing as a foremast hand," he muttered. "Well, it's my wits against his, and I don't think I need fear. I don't fear, anyhow."

CHAPTER VI.

THE BOS'N INTERFERES.

"I don't believe we can sleep in that hole," grumbled Patsy Garvan, an hour later, when the steamer was making her way out of the Narrows. "Did you get a sniff at it?"

"You mean the forec's'le?" grinned Chick. "It is pretty thick in there, for a fact. What about it, chief?"

"I'm going to sleep on deck to-night," replied Nick Carter. "You two might as well do the same. It's not cold, and if you take a blanket apiece from your bunks, you'll be all right. The other men down there won't care. Most of them haven't got over their shore drunks, anyhow."

Thus it was that Nick was asleep, well forward, with his head on a coil of rope, when, several hours later, some one kicked him in the ribs, accompanying the attention with a foul oath.

The detective was on his feet in an instant. After a glance around to see that Chick and Patsy were still sleeping, and hidden from the gaze of the man who had disturbed him, he turned his eyes upon the scarred and scowling features of Clegg.

"What's the matter?" asked Nick quietly.

"Matter?" howled the bos'n. "Matter? Who are you, to ask *me* what's the matter?"

The detective did not reply. He moved aside, to enter the forecastle.

Clegg stepped squarely in his way and glowered at him like an angry hyena, at the same time raising his immense fists, as if inclined to use them without further parley.

Chick and Patsy had been disturbed by the bos'n's hoarse voice, and were on their feet, but, at a sign from their chief, did not come forward to interfere.

Three or four of the other men of the crew—tough-looking scoundrels, as a whole—were watching the altercation from the shadows of the forecastle. They knew Clegg's reputation as a rough-and-tumble fighter, and were prepared to see this new man receive a lesson that would last him all through the voyage.

"Perhaps you'd like one of them staterooms aft?" snarled Clegg, shoving his face close to the detective's. "There's some passengers back there might like to talk to a gentleman like you. You're too good to sleep in the forec's'le, and, from what I can see, you're not good enough to do the work. It ought to be over the side for yours."

"I slept on deck because the forec's'le is close and foul. That was all. Fresh air costs the owner of the ship nothing, and I took what I wanted."

This calm statement fairly staggered the bos'n. He had never met such polite insolence from a man under him before.

Uttering an incoherent grunt of rage, he aimed a tremendous blow at Nick Carter. It was turned aside by the detective with contemptuous ease, so Clegg decided on other tactics, which he had often employed with sucess.

Down went his hard bullet head, and he tried to butt the detective in the stomach.

But Nick Carter was prepared for that sort of attack, just as he had been for an onslaught with the fists.

With a strength that those who did not know him would not have expected in one of his ordinary physique, the detective got out of the way of the hard skull that was coming at him like a battering-ram, and clasping Clegg around the body, swung him off his feet.

"G-r-r-r!" gurgled the bos'n.

Up over his head Nick Carter heaved the burly rascal, held him there a second, and then hurled him into the scupper, where dirty water ebbed and flowed in foul bubbles, ere it passed out of the scupper hole to the sea.

Fortunately for Clegg, his head alighted on some rope. It saved him a little. Even with that, he lay still, half stunned.

The members of the crew who had witnessed this lively and unexpected incident gasped, as they wondered what would follow such sacrilege. Knocking down a boatswain, or any other petty officer, on a vessel of the style of the *Cherokee*, is a crime for which simple death is altogether an inadequate punishment.

It was daylight now, and Van Cross, lounging on the bridge, had witnessed the fracas with grim delight. So long as somebody was hurt in a fight, the genial mate did not care particularly who it was. He roared down to Nick Carter:

"Hey, you! Come up here!"

The detective responded "Aye, aye!" coolly, and walked aft. On the way he stepped over the body of the bos'n with as much unconcern as if it had been a slush bucket.

As he got close to the bridge, the mate, leaning over, regarded him in frowning admiration.

"Say! What in blazes did you mean by that?" he growled.

Nick detected a grin at the corners of the mate's hard mouth, and he saw that he might find, where he had least expected it, a way of getting to the cabins.

He had come aboard this filthy craft to get in touch with Paul Clayton without his real object being suspected. To do this he had been willing to work as a common seaman as far as Porto Rico, and had brought his two assistants to help him.

But he did not want to lose any more time in getting to work on his real task than was absolutely necessary.

When once he could get to see and talk with Clayton, he hoped his mission would be practically fulfilled. He had no idea of returning to New York on the *Cherokee*, of course.

"The forec's'le is in a filthy condition, sir," was the

detective's answer. "I slept on deck, and the bos'n hit me."

"Where did he hit you?" grinned Cross. "I didn't see him do it."

"He tried to do it," replied Nick, smiling.

Clegg was on his feet now. One of the men had thrown a gallon or two of water on him, and he seemed none the worse for his fall, except that there was a bruise on his cheek bone where he had struck the deck.

The mate beckoned him, and Clegg slouched toward the bridge.

"Look here, Clegg! You aren't fit to do your work, and you won't be for a few days."

"What the——" began Clegg blusteringly.

"Shut up! Sykes, here, will be bos'n until you are better. You get for'ard and help to clean out the fo'c's'le. D'ye hear?"

"I'll see you——" blurted out Clegg.

But the mate flung a leg over the rail of the bridge, evidently with the intention of dropping down to the deck, and Clegg, muttering below his breath, shuffled away to obey orders.

"Sykes, you see that the men clean the brasswork aft. We're a passenger ship now, and we've got to have things dolled up."

Nick Carter responded with the usual "Aye, aye, sir!" and within a few minutes had half a dozen men—including Chick and Patsy—busy around the cabin gangway, polishing and cleaning up, under his directions.

A worried-looking young man, who was addressed by Captain Lawton as "Mr. Miles," came up the companionway and strolled along the deck.

"See him, chief?" whispered Patsy, as he contrived to brush up against the new bos'n.

"Yes. Don't talk," came from Nick Carter's closed lips.

The Mr. Miles was Paul Clayton. Nick had recognized him instantly from his photograph, although the young fellow was in a long storm overcoat which came up to his chin, and the heavy cap he wore was pulled far down over his brows.

"She rolls a bit in a cross sea, Mr. Miles," remarked Captain Lawton, falling into step by the side of his passenger.

"I don't mind it," answered Paul quietly.

He increased his speed. Obviously he wanted to get away from the captain.

But the skipper did not heed. He desired to talk, and he was not the man to let the wishes of anybody else prevail when they ran counter to his own. So he kept on by the side of Paul Clayton, smoking his foul pipe and gossiping comfortably.

"I tell you, Mr. Miles," he grunted, "there's nothing like a boat of this kind, no matter where you are going. These here lines, what they have between New York and Europe, with their swimming pools and swell restaurants and roof gardens and theaters! Bah! Boats weren't intended for anything like that. Give me a good sea boat like the *Cherokee*, and——"

One of the crew came swaying along the deck, and whispered something in the captain's ear that made him frown.

"Tell 'em to man the hand pumps," was his sharp order. "We ain't going to waste power on the steam pump with a lot of lazy deck hands loafing about."

Paul Clayton turned away and went down to the cabin.

It was a stuffy place, consisting of one rather large, low saloon, with four doors of little staterooms—two on either side.

The young fellow saw that the saloon was empty, and taking a key from his pocket, he let himself into one of the narrow cabins and closed the door.

Hardly had he done so when the man whom Nick Carter had recognized as John Garrison Rayne—but who was known to the captain as Mr. James Boris—pushed open the door of the adjoining cabin and looked about to see whether any one was in the saloon.

So far as Boris—or Rayne—could see, there was no one there.

If he had looked behind a dingy curtain of sailcloth which hung at the doorway of the saloon, on a rod, so that it could be pushed along to keep out the wind in bad weather, he would have found that he was not alone.

Nick Carter had set all his men to work swabbing down the decks—even Patsy and Chick—and had followed Rayne as he made his way to the stairs from the other side of the ship, evidently thinking himself unobserved.

Rayne grinned as he saw that the other passenger actually had forgotten to take the key from the lock of his door.

There were two oil lamps swinging from the low ceiling of the saloon. Since but little daylight could get into the place through the two windows, the lamps were kept burning all day, as well as at night.

Slyly, the archrogue stole up to the nearest lamp and put up his hand to turn it off.

Just as he got there Nick Carter lurched violently against him, nearly throwing him to the floor.

With an oath, Rayne turned to see who had dared to jostle him. He looked into the innocent eyes of Joe Sykes, the new bos'n.

Nick had allowed all expression to leave his face, and to the angry rascal appeared only a seaman who was sorry for what he had done.

"I beg your pardon, sir!" apologized Nick. "The ship jumped just then, and I haven't quite got my sea legs on. I've had rather a long spell ashore, you see."

The detective's voice was disguised, and was as husky as that of any old salt who had been facing bad weather for a quarter of a century or so.

"Who are you?" demanded Rayne. "A steward?"

"I acts that part sometimes, sir," replied Nick. "We haven't got everything as well as if it was a regular passenger ship. But I'm the ship's bos'n in general, sir. Only, I'm supposed to do anything what has to be done, you see."

"I'm!"

"Yes, sir. I have to be down here in the cabin for quite a spell now," added Nick Carter. "I have to sweep."

"Well, sweep, confound you!" snarled John Garrison Rayne. "But if you ever shove against me again I'll make you regret it."

He swung around and tramped up the steep stairs to the deck.

Nick Carter smiled. When he was sure that Rayne had gone altogether, he knocked at the door of the stateroom into which Paul Clayton had retired, leaving the key in the lock.

CHAPTER VII.

A FORCED CONFESSION.

The door was flung open as Nick knocked, and before his hand could be dropped. Paul Clayton faced him inquiringly, and somewhat indignantly.

"Beg your pardon, sir. May I have a word with you?" asked Nick respectfully.

"Why, who are you?" demanded Clayton.

"The bos'n, sir."

As the detective spoke he stepped into the cabin and shut the door behind him.

His quick eye swept around the room, and he saw a suit case lying in the berth. Also he noted that initials which had been put on with black paint at one end had been scraped off.

"If you don't mind listening to me for a few minutes, Mr. Miles," said Nick Carter, "I may have something interesting to say. You know, sailors sometimes find out things about passengers that no one would think they knew."

"What the dickens are you driving at?" snapped Clayton. "I don't want the bos'n in my room. Are you sober?"

"Yes, sir. My name is Sykes—Joe Sykes. I never drink on board ship. When I'm ashore, that's different."

"Are you certain you've got over what you drank before you came aboard?"

"Quite certain, Mr. Miles. I only wanted to tell you that there are people on board this ship who mean to get whatever property you have. They think there are some valuable things in your baggage—jewelry, maybe."

Paul Clayton started and turned pale.

"Jewelry? Why should I have any jewelry?"

"I don't know that. But there is an idea among one or two of the men that you could tell what has become of Stephen Reed's diamonds. So far there's only three of us that knows it. I'm one, and two of my messmates are the others."

"Are you sure you are a sailor?" asked Clayton, with a curious twitching of his mouth. "You are not a man in the employ of my uncle?"

"Your uncle?"

Paul Clayton trembled violently and sat down on the suit case in the berth, while he wiped the damp face with his handkerchief.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he laughed nervously. "That's funny. I mean a pawnbroker, of course. My uncle! You know they call pawnbrokers that, don't you?"

"Yes."

There was a pause. Then Nick Carter stepped a little closer to the young man and looked him straight in the eyes.

"I am a sailor, as I have told you, Mr. Paul Clayton —"

"My name is Miles," interrupted the white-faced passenger.

"On board the *Cherokee*," assented Nick. "I know it is, and I will call you Mr. Miles hereafter. I only wanted you to know that I am aware of your name on shore. You need not ask me how I know all this," he went on. "I have only to tell you that you will never get that suit case safely to San Juan unless you are very careful."

"Who will take it away from me?"

"Nobody, if you take my advice," returned Nick. "But there is a man on board who means to have the jewelry in that case as soon as he can get it. And if he decides that it is necessary to murder you, to carry out his purpose, he would have no hesitation in doing even that."

"Who is the man?"

"He is your fellow passenger, and his name is James Boris."

"His real name?"

"That matters not. He calls himself James Boris, and that will do for us. But make a note of the fact that I am speaking from actual knowledge, and not merely on suspicion. He was trying to get into your cabin just now."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Clayton. "How could he? I saw him on deck when I was there, and he would not try to get in while I was in the room. I'm bigger and younger than he is. He is a gray-headed man, and not very strong in appearance, either."

"Well, I will help you against him, if you will accept my aid," continued the detective. "The best way to make those jewels in that suit case secure would be to let me take charge of them."

The young man laughed derisively.

"That would be a splendid thing to do, wouldn't it? How do I know that you are not in the gang to rob me?"

Nick dived into an inside pocket, under the blue jersey he had been wearing since coming on the ship, and brought out a letter in an envelope. He handed it to Paul Clayton without a word.

The young man started as he recognized the handwriting on the envelope. It was that of Lethia Ford!

The letter was addressed to "Mr. Paul Clayton." There was nothing else in the superscription, but Clayton had seen his name written by the girl so many times that he was sure it had been traced by her hand this time.

"You know whom that letter is from, don't you?" asked Nick Carter, in his quiet way.

"I think I know the writing," admitted Clayton. "There is only one person who makes certain funny little curlycues. Still——"

He opened the envelope—which was not sealed—and took out a single sheet of paper. As he did so a faint perfume came to his nostrils. He read the note eagerly. It read:

"DEAR PAUL: Trust Joe Sykes, and come back to me as soon as you can. Uncle wants to see you. He is our friend now. He really is. Ask Joe Sykes. Lovingly, LETHIA."

Slowly the young man put the missive back into the envelope, and gazed at Nick Carter.

"You know who wrote that letter?" asked Nick gravely.

"Yes."

"And you will trust Joe Sykes?"

There was a long pause. At last Clayton put out his hand and took the detective's in an earnest clasp.

"I *will* trust Joe Sykes," he answered, in low, distinct tones. "I must obey the person who wrote this note."

"Good!" ejaculated Nick. "I'm glad I got the young lady to write it. I thought I might need something of the kind."

"You could hardly expect me to believe in any one

whom I had never seen before, when I have reason to think the whole world is my enemy," declared Paul Clayton. "Lethia knows. When she tells me to trust to you, there is only one thing for me to do."

He smiled, and again shook hands with the bos'n.

"What did you intend to do, Mr. Miles?" asked Nick. "Why are you going to Porto Rico?"

"When I first engaged passage on this steamer, it was with the idea of getting away from New York before my uncle could find me," was the reply. "I knew his relentless nature, and though I swear to you that I had determined to give up the property to him intact, I was aware that that might not satisfy him. I know enough of criminal law to understand that the mere restitution of stolen property would not relieve the thief of responsibility."

Nick Carter nodded, without speaking.

"I thought that, if I could get away to some place where I was not known, and where I would be safe from pursuit, I would send the jewelry back to my uncle, and then go somewhere else, to make a new start in life."

"You have it—there?" asked Carter, pointing to the suit case.

"Yes."

"And you will trust it to me to take care of till we get to San Juan?"

"That may be the wise plan."

"I think it is," said the detective. "In fact——"

There was a tap at the door.

Motioning to Paul Clayton to stand still, near the window, Nick Carter opened the door calmly and stepped outside.

As he did so, a hand was clasped on his arm, and Patsy Garvan whispered eagerly in the ear of the detective:

"Beat it out of here, chief! That crook with the gray hair—I needn't mention his name—is chewing the rag with the captain, and I heard the word 'Sykes' as I sneaked past them. They're coming down here to look for you."

"That's all right, Patsy. Where's Chick?"

"Helping to slush down the deck forward," answered Patsy. "Want him?"

"Not now. Tell him to be ready in case I give the signal. Now get out."

Patsy Garvan slipped along forward to get to the deck by a hatch near the cook's galley, while Nick Carter sauntered to the companionway aft.

"I hope Rayne hasn't seen through these whiskers of mine," muttered Nick. "I don't think there's any danger of that. But he may be suspicious of me, even without knowing who I am. Well, it isn't the first time we have pitted our wits against each other. But I must find out his game."

He went swiftly up the stairs, and seeing one of his men leaning over the side, thus "soldiering" on his job of cleaning down decks, he seized the fellow by the two shoulders in his powerful fingers and forced him to his knees.

"Get to your work, will you?" he growled, with as much ferocity as could be expected from any petty officer on a tramper. "Don't let me catch you loafing on me, or you'll get——"

"Sykes!"

It was the captain's voice, and Nick Carter straightened up to face the autocrat of the vessel.

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"Were you in the cabin a while ago?" demanded the skipper, with a threatening note in his husky voice.

"Yes, sir," replied Nick Carter unhesitatingly.

"What were you doing down there?"

"Sweeping. I had the decks all in pretty good shape. That is, they will be when this loafer here finishes up. So I took a broom and began to sweep out the saloon."

"He told me he had to act as a steward sometimes," put in a snarling voice, as Rayne stepped forward. "Afterward, he was insolent."

"Sorry about that, Mr. Boris," returned Captain Lawton. "I don't allow my men to be insolent to any one but me. When they are, I knock them down with anything that's handy—a belaying pin, or something. If they give back talk to a passenger, the passenger can do what he likes about it. He has a right to knock the lubber down, and that's what I want him to do."

Having uttered this pronunciamento, Captain Lawton walked away and went up to the bridge. A grin was concealed by his heavy mustache. He would have rather liked to see James Boris try to knock down Sykes. Excitement was the breath of life to the gentle commander of the *Cherokee*.

Rayne did not say anything more. He turned his back sharply toward the detective. Then he went down to the saloon, and thence to his private cabin.

"Say, chief," whispered Chick, as he contrived to pass Nick Carter at this moment. "We'll have to look out for that fellow. He gave you a look, as he went down those stairs, that meant poison."

"I saw it," responded the detective. "But I think I can find an antidote to that poison."

CHAPTER VIII.

A PLAN OF DEFENSE.

Nick Carter was gazing absently down the companionway, after setting his men to painting the outside of the chart room and the steps to the bridge.

It was the purpose of the detective to find employment for his two assistants in the after part of the ship, so that they would have an excuse to linger in that region.

To do this he had to keep the other men busy, too. He managed this easily, for Nick Carter was really a sailor, and was as much at home on the deck of a steamship as walking in Fifth Avenue or strolling about the lobby of a Broadway hotel.

Suddenly something bumped against him, and he saw that Paul Clayton had just come up the stairway and accidentally touched him with the corner of the suit case that had been in his small cabin.

"Mr. Sykes," whispered Clayton.

"Call me plain Sykes," returned the detective. "What are you bringing that up here for?"

"That man Boris is down there, and though I am not afraid that he can take away this case while I am about, I cannot be sure of always being in the cabin. He's a cunning rascal, and he is lying in wait, to jump out as soon as I become the least bit careless."

"You evidently know Mr. Boris," remarked Nick Carter dryly.

"So I want you to take charge of this at once," went on Paul Clayton eagerly.

He pushed the suit case into Nick Carter's hand with a nervous haste that was in marked contrast with his previous hesitation about even admitting that it was valuable.

Looking about, to make sure he was not observed, Nick pushed the case under some canvas, and, as Rayne came sauntering up the stairs, busied himself in giving orders to the men working under him.

"I don't think my friend Rayne can be sure I was talking to Clayton," thought the detective, as Clayton lighted a cigarette and promenaded the narrow deck on one side, while Rayne carelessly strolled along on the other. "I noticed that Rayne bowed to Clayton, as if he wanted to be friends. That's all part of the rascal's game, of course."

He beckoned to Patsy Garvan, and, as his astute young assistant ran toward him, with the headlong haste of an obedient subordinate, Nick ostentatiously growled at him for not painting faster.

"My wrist hurts me," pleaded Patsy, with a crooked grin at one corner of his mouth. "Gee, Mr. Sykes! It's a wonder I can paint at all. I don't believe I could lift a glass of grog to my mouth, the way I feel now."

All this was for the benefit of any of the other men who might be listening.

"Is French below, in the engine room?" asked Nick Carter, in a whisper.

"Yes. I saw him ten minutes ago, when I went down the hatchway to get a bucket," was the equally cautious reply.

"He's in charge of the engines sometimes, isn't he?"

"Yes. Moggins, the engineer, has been drinking ever since he came aboard. Couldn't stop all at once, after having a good time on shore. Now, when he finds French knows all about engines, he lets him take them a good part of the time."

"Who's got them now?"

"Moggins himself. Captain Lawton was down in the engine room a while ago, swearing because we weren't going faster. He said we were burning enough coal to make twenty-five knots."

"Well?"

"Moggins got on his dignity, and told the skipper he was short-handed. There were so many repairs to make, he said, he couldn't keep up steam with the men he had."

"I'm glad he told the captain that, Patsy." Then, after a pause: "You are a pretty good engineer, I know."

"I have learned a few things about engines from you, chief," admitted Patsy, smiling.

"I want you to go down in that engine room and help French," said the detective, as he gazed about him, to make sure they were not overheard. "I'll speak to Captain Lawton about it right away. Stay here, but keep on with your work."

Patsy began to paint the coamings of the after hatchway, while Nick Carter walked to the bridge, and standing at the foot of the ladder, called out, with as much respect as he could put into his rather rebellious voice:

"Captain Lawton!"

"Hello? What is it?"

"I should like to speak a word to you," explained Nick Carter.

The captain hesitated a moment or two, as he glared down with red-rimmed eyes.

He was not accustomed to being hailed on the bridge by his boatswain, and was rather disposed to resent it. Then he decided that this man Sykes was smarter than most of his crew, and he told him gruffly to come up on the bridge.

The two talked for five minutes with considerable animation—to the disgust of Van Cross, who was at the other end of the bridge, where he could not overhear—and then Nick Carter came to the deck and called over Patsy.

"Captain's orders that you go to the engine room," snapped Nick.

"Aye, aye, sir!" replied Patsy. "Shall I go now?"

"Yes," was Nick Carter's reply. "And there's some waste under that canvas over there. Take it with you, Chick, you help him. Wrap it in burlap. There's a lot of it."

Notwithstanding that Nick Carter gave these orders in a matter-of-fact way, and as if it were all routine work, he was actually trembling with anxiety as his two assistants went to the heap of canvas.

Under it lay the suit case, containing, as he believed, not less than eighty thousand dollars' worth of jewelry, mostly in diamonds.

This suit case must be concealed in a heap of cotton waste and got down to the engine room without being suspected.

It took ten minutes to accomplish the feat. But it was done at last, and when Nick saw Patsy go down the hatch, which would lead, two decks below, to the ironlined engine-and-boiler room, he was thankful that he had progressed thus far in saving the jewelry for Stephen Reed, and at the same time was in a fair way to keep his word to Lethia Ford.

"If it were only recovering this jewelry, what an easy thing it would be," muttered the detective. "I would just take possession of it, and arrest the man who took it as soon as we get to San Juan."

He smiled to himself as he reflected on what a queer case he had in hand.

"Am I compounding a felony?" he asked himself whimsically. "Have I the right, as an honest man and good citizen, to protect this young Clayton? He does not deny that he stole the stuff, and, if it were not for this girl, who believes in him so, I am inclined to think I should do my duty. As it is—— Well, women have a way of turning things in the direction they want them to go without much regard to what some of them like to call 'man-made laws.' I'll go below and see that the 'cotton waste' is stowed away safely."

Making sure that his men were all intent on their painting, Nick took advantage of his right, as bos'n, to do pretty much as he pleased so long as he appeared to be busy, and made his way down to the engine room.

As he came to the spiral iron stairs that took him to the side of the boilers, he saw Patsy and Chick put the suit case, enveloped in its burlap and cotton waste, in a closet at the other end of the engine room.

It was a place in which tools, oil, and material generally that might be required was stowed away.

Moggins was a wiry-looking man, with scraggy fea-

tures, who seemed to be oozing oil from his face, hands, and cap, and had a generally greasy appearance in his clothing.

He had the abstracted air one generally sees in an engineer when watching his engines, and he seldom spoke, except to give a curt order to somebody.

Just now it was evident that Mr. Moggins had been lubricating his own personal engine with water-front whisky that no doubt he had brought aboard with him. Besides that, he bore signs of still nursing what is picturesquely termed a "hangover."

"Hey, there!" he grunted, as Nick Carter appeared on the iron stairs just over his head. "What do you think you're doing? Have you anything you want to do in my engine room? Because, if you haven't——"

Moggins lurched his way along a narrow iron gallery, protected on either side by a single rail, and met Nick at the foot of the stairs, with a menacing waggle of the head.

"I'm bos'n of the *Cherokee*," announced Nick.

"Oh, you are? What's the matter with Clegg?"

"Sick," was the detective's brief reply. "The old man heard you were short-handed, and he told me to send two of my men down to help. They're both engineers. That is, they can be useful under a good man."

There was subtle flattery in this last sentence that caught Mr. Moggins in the right place. It occurred to him that this new bos'n knew what he was talking about.

"All right!" he growled. "I've been worked so hard I haven't had time to clean my engines right since we left New York. All I could do was to work up steam till I thought I'd crack the sides out of the old tub, and do it without about half the number of men I ought to have."

"How about French?" asked Nick.

"No good!" was the prompt reply of the engineer. "I picked him up in West Street one day, when he was giving back talk to a policeman, and the cop let me have him when I promised to take him right aboard my ship. Of course, this here French was drunk. It was one of those mean souses, too. Wanted to lick everybody. I had to hand him a punch myself before I got him here."

"Why did you take all that trouble?"

"Because he had sense enough to say he was an engineer, and I could see, by his hands, that he had been around oil and hot irons. I was short-handed, and I thought I could use him. Of course, I knew he was a sailorman as soon as I spotted him."

Moggins said all this grudgingly, as was his way at all times. He was particularly taciturn when he had been drinking. It was evidently because he had a grievance against French that he said as much now as he did.

"Is French as good about his work as you expected?"

"Yes, when he attends to it. But—*that* is what I don't like," added Moggins, dropping his voice. "Look over there!"

Nick Carter followed the engineer's glance.

A square-jawed, lowering-looking fellow, in overalls and jumper, had gone up the iron steps from the boiler room beyond, and was talking earnestly, in the shadow, with—John Garrison Rayne!

CHAPTER IX.

THE APACHE'S LITTLE JOKE.

Rayne and French seemed to see at the same instant that Moggins was looking at them, and the former slipped up the spiral staircase and was gone on the instant.

"Say, French!" growled Moggins. "Come here!"

The fellow came slowly, winding between the engines and stepping over obstructions mechanically. There was an expression of sullen defiance in his heavy face, and his big, gnarled hands were clenched truculently.

"Fill them oil cups on number two engine," ordered Moggins. "And don't talk to the passengers."

Without waiting for a reply, or seeming to expect one, Moggins went over to where Patsy and Chick were looking at gauges and moving about with oil cans, and seemed to be satisfied. Then he passed through into the boiler room, where a crew of stokers were shoveling coal into the fire boxes, and seemingly thinking of nothing but their work.

Having completed his short tour of inspection, Moggins retired to his own particular cabin, within easy reach of the engine room, and turned in for a snooze. He believed he could trust his two new men and French to keep things going for an hour or two.

Nick had gone up to the deck. He wanted to see what Rayne was after.

That gentleman had lighted a cigarette, and was strolling up and down the deck, as if perfectly at his ease. No one would have supposed he had just come from a confidential interview with the greasy and decidedly tough Mr. French.

On the other side of the deck walked Paul Clayton, nervously puffing a cigar.

"How is it, Sykes?" asked Clayton, without stopping, as he passed the detective.

"Keep your eye on Boris," replied Nick, walking on.

For the remainder of the day Nick Carter went about his duty as bos'n, doing it so well that it met the entire approval of the captain, while even Van Cross regarded him as a man to be trusted.

Clegg worked about the deck, outwardly resigned to the loss of his office, and doing whatever he was told to do without demur.

But the detective kept a close eye on him. He knew that it was not in the nature of a man of the ex-bosn's type to take a thrashing without seeking to get even.

Once in a while Nick went down to the engine room, to see how Chick and Patsy were getting on.

He learned that Moggins had stayed in his bunk, in company with a bottle, and was not likely to show up for work before the following day, at the earliest.

On a well-regulated vessel this sort of thing would not have been permitted. But, so long as the engines were working smoothly and the ship was cutting through the water at the speed she usually maintained, Captain Bill Lawton was not disposed to inquire how it was all done.

The commander, with his two passengers, sat down to meals at the regular times, together. They talked at intervals, and, so far as a casual observer might have discerned, were on fairly good terms.

Nick had cautioned Paul Clayton against showing any resentment toward James Boris, and particularly not to let him think he was under suspicion.

In due time things began to move.

It was just getting dark, and the ship's signal lights had all been placed, when two men slipped into the shadows of the forecastle, looking about to make sure they were not seen, and that no one was near enough to overhear their conversation.

"Well, French?"

It was Rayne speaking. He had managed to elude the vigilance of Nick Carter, and was here without the latter knowing just what had become of him.

This was not due to any cleverness on the part of Rayne, for he had not yet found out that the detective recognized him. Cunning as the rascal was, he believed that Nick had no idea of his identity.

So he had sneaked to the forecastle, more with the idea of escaping the notice of Clayton than anything else.

While he had no doubt that Nick Carter had some purpose in being aboard the *Cherokee*, he did not think it concerned him personally.

"He's after that duck with the diamonds in his suit case," he had told himself more than once. "Well, if Carter can get them while I'm aboard, he's welcome to them."

Then he had chuckled grimly. He had made up his mind that this was one time where he was to get the better of the man who always had beaten him in the past.

When Rayne uttered his interrogative "Well?" French grunted and shrugged his great shoulders.

"I guess we'll do it all right," he growled.

"Guess?" rejoined Rayne, in low-voiced ferocity. "We've *got* to do it. When I get off this boat at San Juan, I'm going to have that stuff packed all about my clothes—with the exception of what I can't carry, and you'll have to handle that."

"What do you want me to do?" asked French.

"You say you have found that suit case in your oil cupboard below?"

"Yes."

"You didn't get into it?"

"No. I hadn't the time. But I saw the initials had been scraped off the end, just as you told me they were, and I picked it up and shook it."

"Well?"

"At first I didn't hear anything. But I shook harder, and then there was a rattling. The more I shook, the more it rattled—whatever was inside, and I thought there was a chinking sound as if gold chains or something were moving about."

"I don't see how you could make out a 'chinkling,' as you call it," returned Rayne incredulously. "But no doubt that's the suit case. Who brought it down there?"

"Those two new men. They had it covered up in a lot of waste and burlap."

"Who are the men?"

"I don't know. One of them says his name is Pat, and the other one they call John. My own opinion is that they caught on to this stuff in the cabin and sneaked it down to the engine room, ready to take ashore when we get to San Juan," was French's reply.

The well-dressed scoundrel did not speak for nearly a minute. He was carefully considering the probabilities. At last, he came to the conclusion that French had hit on the correct solution.

"We shall have to find out, first, if the suit case really has the stuff in it," he said. "Then we'll see about putting it in a safer place than where it is, before this young fellow—who calls himself Miles, but whose real name is Paul Clayton—knows that it is gone from his stateroom."

"I'll find a way to get the thing open," offered French.

"How soon can you do it?"

"In about ten minutes. Moggins is in his bunk, dead to the world, and I'm boss when he isn't around."

"I see," grinned Rayne.

"Of course you see. I'll tell those two men to get busy in another part of the engine room, and there are tools enough down there for me to lift the lid without much trouble."

"All right! Go ahead! Bring it up here, and then we'll see about going through it. When we have emptied the suit case, we will throw it overboard."

"Good! But, if you see any one in the way, it will be up to you to lead him up the deck," grunted French.

The fellow cautiously moved out of the shadow, and, after a quick look to make sure no one observed him, reached the hatchway, and by it gained the iron staircase which took him to the engine room.

"We shall be at San Juan in three or four days," muttered Rayne. "It ought to be easy to hold off that fellow Clayton for that length of time. If I thought Nick Carter suspected me, I might not have such a smooth road. As it is, I will fool him right under his nose. I believe, when I get right away with the goods, I'll write him a letter and let him know that, for once, John Garrison Rayne has put it all over him."

The rascal enjoyed the thought of this joke so much that he was constrained to lean against the bulwark and look down at the swiftly moving waters, to go over it again inaudibly.

He did not perceive the figure of a man in the shadow of a big ventilator only a few yards from him, nor notice that this man had been there when the assistant engineer slipped down the hatchway.

Rayne would surely have changed his plans if he had noticed it.

The man at the ventilator had not heard what the two conspirators were talking about. But he had seen that John Garrison Rayne—known in many cities on both sides of the ocean as the "Apache"—had given the other person an order of some kind.

The attitude of the Apache to French was one that no other crook of Nick Carter's acquaintance could quite take, and when this man at the ventilator—Nick Carter himself, of course—noted the imperious way in which Rayne waved his hand to his underling, he knew that something of importance was in the wind.

It was lucky for Nick that Rayne leaned over the bulwark to enjoy the joke he had determined on at the expense of the famous detective. It gave him the opportunity he wanted to slip down the hatchway after the rascally assistant engineer.

Another piece of luck was that, as French went down the spiral staircase, he detected an ominous creaking in the number one engine. He rushed to give first aid with a long-nozzled oil can, and, for the moment, thought of nothing else.

As French darted to the end of a narrow alleyway between the two engines, Nick Carter slipped along in

the opposite direction. Here, sheltered from view by the end of the engine, if French had happened to turn, he called out softly:

"Chick!"

The two assistants of the detective were by his side on the instant, both wide awake and ready for anything.

CHAPTER X.

A TRICK WITH THE STEAM.

Don't use your guns—if you can help it!" were Nick Carter's first words.

"Gee!" ejaculated Patsy Garvan. "That's a good, healthy beginning."

"What are we to do?" asked Chick, with a reproving glance at Patsy.

"Have you got the suit case safely in that cupboard?"

"It was there three minutes ago," was Chick's reply. "What about it?"

"The man French is going to get it and take it on deck."

"Is that so?" exclaimed Patsy ironically. "How's he going to do it? Walk right through Chick and me?"

A terrifying interruption prevented a reply from Nick Carter.

Suddenly a geyserlike volume of steam broke out in the narrow iron room, with a noise that drowned the thumping of the engines and made the ears of everybody ring.

In a second there was nothing to be seen but a gray-white vapor that enveloped everything, and which seemed to become more dense every instant.

Drops of water fell everywhere, and all three found themselves gasping for breath.

Only for a second did Nick Carter and his two assistants permit themselves to be confused by this volcanic torrent of steam, with its deafening noise.

"Get the suit case!" cried Nick.

A derisive chuckle sounded near him—a snicker that he knew did not come from either of his assistants.

In such a fog as had suddenly filled the engine-and-boiler room, it was difficult to retain a sense of direction, but Nick resolutely turned to the left. The oil cupboard was there somewhere, and he had last seen Patsy on his left.

"Look out!" bawled French, from the gloom. "The boilers are going up! Get on deck!"

This did not fool the detective for a second. He was perfectly aware that an exhaust valve had been turned on, and that the steam was the result of a deliberate act by somebody. But there would be no blow-up.

That it was the work of the man French he had no doubt. He had done it to cover his raid on the suit case in the oil cupboard.

The steam continued to pour forth, and immediately there was a hubbub on deck, as well as in the engine room.

"Hello, down there!" roared Captain Lawton's voice. "Get the pumps to work! The ship's on fire!"

"Here, you lubbers!" bellowed Van Cross. "Lively now! Turn on the water down the hatch! Quick!"

"No!" shouted Nick Carter from below. "It isn't a fire! Theres' nothing wrong! But send some men down here!"

It was just now that Nick ran against Chick, as he groped his way through the steam.

"The suit case, Chick!"

"It's all right! Patsy's sitting on it!" was Chick's reply.

"That'll do, then! Find that infernal valve, where all the steam is coming out, and turn it off! If you see French doing any monkey work, knock him down with a wrench!"

"You bet I will!"

Chick disappeared as he said this, and Nick stumbled on in the general direction of the boilers.

He had not gone very far when he heard Patsy shouting angrily, while a gruff voice commanded him to shut up.

The angry voice was that of the Apache, Rayne, and Nick knew the rascal had got to the oil cupboard and was endeavoring to drag the suit case away from Patsy.

Guided by the sound, Nick turned to the right and forced his way along a narrow alley between the engines, to go to the aid of his assistant.

"All right, chief!" said Chick's voice in his ear. "This way! But it would be good to get the steam shut off. French is right there, at the valve. I saw him, but I ran away when I heard Patsy."

"You go and help him," ordered Nick, as his thoughts moved fast. "I'll tackle French. Then we can get the other fellow."

There was no time for argument. Chick realized that the detective would not have given the order unless he had some well-planned idea in his mind. So he darted off to the aid of Patsy, while Nick hurried the other way, to the boilers.

"Get back there!" shouted French, as the form of the detective loomed up near him. "This boiler is going to let go! Get back!"

Nick's reply was to take the burly ruffian by the throat and force him back upon the boiler, while he sought, with the other hand, for the exhaust valve that he knew must be close by.

"Let me up!" shrieked French. "I'm burning. This boiler is red-hot!"

Nick took no heed. He knew the boiler was just hot enough to be unpleasant, without being absolutely dangerous, and he did not mind inflicting some punishment on the scoundrel who was willing to risk the safety of the whole ship for the sake of helping Rayne in his robbery.

"Where's the valve?" he shouted.

"I don't know! Let me up from this boiler!"

"If you don't know, you can stay there till I find it!" was Nick's rejoinder.

"I'll tell you!" blurted out French. "It's under me!"

Nick Carter unceremoniously shoved him aside. Sure enough, there was the valve. It had been pressed into the middle of the assistant engineer's back.

"You blackguard!" ejaculated Nick.

With a few quick turns of his wrist, the detective turned off the steam, and the hissing noise ceased at once.

He should have kept his eye on French.

Before he could rise from the stooping posture he had been obliged to assume in handling the valve, a heavy blow on his head knocked him nearly senseless.

He had a hazy knowledge that the evil face of French

was looking into his own for an instant. Then it disappeared, and the detective found himself lying on a heap of ashes, in front of the closed iron door of the fire box.

He was in a shallow pit, such as is often found in front of the fire box, where the ashes are not likely to spread and cause trouble.

Even in his half-dazed condition, Nick realized that this boiler was a sort of auxiliary. Otherwise the fire box would have been turned the other way. Moreover, there would have been stokers in attendance, even in spite of the steam.

It took the detective more than a minute to get back his senses and anything like his normal strength. At the end of that period, however, he was again ready to get into the fray, and he prepared to step out of the pit.

Before he could do it, a bulky, oblong object, with hard, square corners, came from above, and, striking him upon the shoulder, nearly laid him on his back.

He recovered himself before he could fall, however, and, as he staggered back across the pit, managed to clasp the thing in his arms.

"Great guns!" he muttered. "It's the suit case!"

He dropped it to the floor, and then, as the steam still surged about him, saw that there was a broad-shouldered, gray-haired man preparing to knock him down with a heavy coal shovel.

"Not yet, my friend!" shouted Nick, as he darted to one side and avoided the blow. "Hands up!"

He was holding his automatic pistol pointed straight at the chest of the gray-haired man above him.

"Throw up your hands—quick!" he emphasized. "You're caught, Rayne! This is where you go back to Sing Sing!"

"What do you mean? Are you drunk?"

But John Garrison Rayne slowly lifted his two hands until they were higher than his head, while he glared savagely at the bearded man whom the ship knew as Joe Sykes, the bos'n, but whom the Apache had recognized immediately as Nick Carter, his deadliest enemy.

"That's right!" remarked Nick coolly. "Stand there till I bring a man to put you in irons."

"You seem to be throwing on a lot of dog for an ordinary bos'n," growled Rayne. "I guess I'll have to make you explain to the captain what you are doing with a passenger's suit case down here in the boiler room."

"I'll explain," replied Nick. "But don't you move until I tell you, or you won't be in a condition to understand the explanation. Chick!"—

He called out this name sharply, as he tried to peer through the clouds of steam. They still were thick, notwithstanding that the valve had been turned off for at least two minutes.

There was no reply. The confused rumblings of many rough voices in the engine room came to him, suggesting that the officers of the ship were straightening out matters in Moggins' domain. But Nick could not distinguish the tones of either of his two assistants.

"Patsy!" he called.

Patsy did not respond. That was not remarkable. It was not easy to pick out any single voice among so many, especially amid so much confusion.

"How long am I to stand like this, with my hands in this uncomfortable position?" snarled Rayne.

"Until I tell you to drop them," replied Nick Carter shortly.

"Oh, I don't know. I believe I'll put them down, and take a chance of anything you may do with your gun."

"I would advise you not to take that chance," returned the detective coldly. "I'll have some of my men here directly. If they don't come, I'll handle you myself."

The words were hardly out of his mouth, when a strong hand grasped his right wrist, and the pistol fell into the ashes at his feet.

Almost simultaneously, the suit case was picked up and swung into the arms of Rayne, who vanished in the steam!

CHAPTER XI.

TWO MEN IN IRONS.

There was a loud laugh behind him, and Nick Carter knew that the enemy had executed a successful flanking movement.

Thoroughly angry, the detective turned on his heel and sent out both fists at random, without waiting to take aim or to see where his foe might be.

It was a maneuver he had employed successfully in more than one emergency, although the chances were always three to one against him, at least.

He missed this time. He just had a glimpse of the sneering face of French, and then the rascal was gone, following Rayne.

The blood of Nick Carter was up now.

With a muttered imprecation, he jumped from the pit—after picking up his pistol—resolved to catch both the scoundrels before they could hide the suit case or take out the jewelry.

Of course, they could not get off the ship. But it was conceivable that they might hide Stephen Reed's jewelry, and be prepared to take it away in secret when the vessel should reach port.

Hardly had Nick got out of the pit and reached the doorway of the engine room when he plumped into Paul Clayton.

"What is it, Mr. Sykes?" asked Paul eagerly. "Is the ship going down? Have the boilers burst?"

"No, indeed," laughed the detective bitterly. "But that infernal thief you call Boris has burst out in a new place. Have you seen either of my men down here?"

"I have not seen anything," was Clayton's reply. "I heard the noise, saw the steam pouring out of the hatch, and ran down with the others. I knew that suit case was down here somewhere. I suppose it's safe?"

"I hope so," was the detective's response. "Boris——"

"Has he got it?"

Nick Carter did not answer. He seized Clayton by the wrist and dragged him toward the oil cupboard where the case had been deposited.

The door was closed, and through the staple which secured it was thrust a long, narrow screw driver.

In a second Nick had dragged out the implement and thrown the door open.

From the closet came staggering Chick, followed by Patsy Garvan. Both were pale and gasping.

"Nigh suffocated that time!" Patsy managed to say weakly, as he fell against Nick Carter.

"Where is that blackguard?" demanded Chick, who was in not quite so bad a condition as his comrade.

"Follow me, and we'll find out!" was Nick Carter's response. "We've got to act quickly."

Moggins came surging along the narrow iron gallery, from which the steam now was rapidly evaporating.

Nick Carter flung himself upon the engineer and gave him a shake. It dispelled some of the fogginess with which the whisky Moggins had consumed had enveloped his brain.

"Where's French?" shouted Nick.

"How in thunder should I know?" snarled the engineer, as he tried in vain to break loose from the detective's iron grip. "He came near scalding my whole crew by turning on that steam, and the old man has been chewing the rag 'till I would have handed him one with a spanner if he hadn't been captain of the ship. How should I know where French is?"

"He's your man, isn't he?"

"He was. But I don't want him down here again," was the growling rejoinder. "I'll kill him if I ever see him touch one of my engines again. And these two men you sent down. Where are they?"

"French locked them up in the oil cupboard. That's where they were. They are here, ready for work, now. That is, they will be when they've been up to report at the bridge."

"I don't care whether they work or not," declared Moggins desperately. "I've been short-handed ever since we left New York. But, by the great North Sea whale, I've handled these engines with only half a crew before, and I can do it again!"

He spat disgustedly, and, oil can in hand, busied himself about his engines.

Moggins felt that he had enough to do in getting results out of his machinery under adverse circumstances, without bothering himself about men who worked only when it suited them.

Nick Carter did not wait to listen to all of the engineer's remarks. He hustled up the spiral stairs, followed by his two assistants and Clayton.

"Stop!" suddenly yelled Nick, as he saw two men rushing up in front of him.

"Knock that fellow down, French!" shouted a savage voice.

French was immediately in front of the detective, and Rayne was at the top of the stairs. The two men, between them, were carrying the suit case.

Just as the detective called out, Clayton caught sight of the precious receptacle.

"There it is, Sykes!" he cried. "Let me get past!"

Clayton tried to force his way up past Nick, and in the momentary confusion the suit case vanished.

With a mighty effort, Rayne had dragged the bulky thing out of the hands of French. Then, with a bound he gained the top of the stairs, and was about to rush along between decks a few feet, on his way to the hatch that opened upon the upper deck.

It was at this instant that Nick Carter managed to grasp the bottom of his coat and pull him backward.

Rayne, holding the suit case in his right arm, turned on the narrow iron landing and endeavored to push the detective backward with his left elbow.

"Let go of me!" snarled Rayne.

"Drop that suit case!" came from the detective.

"Let go!" repeated the Apache menacingly.

"It's no use, Rayne! I have you!"

The use of his name by the disguised Nick Carter seemed to madden the notorious crook. He had hoped all along that the detective had not recognized him.

Now that he found he was known, it seemed to Rayne that all hope was gone if he should be overcome. The thought made him desperate.

"French!" he howled.

"What is it?" demanded French, who had sneaked past his bolder comrade, and was trying to get out of sight in the dark 'tween decks. "What can I do? Shut him off yourself."

"You white-livered cur!" hissed Rayne. "I don't need your help. I *can* do it myself."

He flung himself on Nick Carter, and tried with all his might to hurl the detective over the railing.

Immediately beneath, one of the great engines was raising and lowering its massive arms, while the fly-wheel whirled just beyond.

To fall over the railing meant not only death to the person who should drop into that thumping, twisting, whirring machinery, but it would perhaps destroy the motive power of the vessel, with all the danger that that implied.

The detective realized this, but he felt that it was only a question of which one should go over.

Chick and Patsy were below, but they could not get to their chief because Paul Clayton was in the way, and also on account of their being so far off.

"Get him around the neck, chief!" shrieked Patsy. "Shove him over backward!"

"Look out for his left hand!" warned Chick.

"Grab that suit case, Clayton!" directed Nick Carter, breathless, but perfectly cool. "Save that, no matter what happens."

"Get away from me!" howled Rayne, as he thrust out a foot at Clayton.

That kick was fatal to the Apache.

In pushing out his foot, he lost his balance slightly.

Wildly, he sought to recover himself. But the detective had him in a grip that nothing could break.

"Patsy!" shouted Nick.

"What?"

"You and Chick be ready to get this when it comes."

Neither of the assistants asked what "this" meant. Nor did they know exactly what they were to do. All they did understand was that their chief had determined to do something decisive, and that they were expected to give him aid at the proper moment.

"Let her go!" bawled Patsy.

Clayton caught hold of one end of the suit case, and, with a fierce wrench, tore it out of the rascal's hands.

At the same instant Nick Carter stooped a little, to gain a solid purchase. Then, straightening up with a jerk, he lifted Rayne over the iron, and let him go, headfirst!

There was a gasp of horror from three of the stokers, who had run out of the boiler room at the noise of the scuffle over their heads.

Had John Garrison Rayne been less active than he was, he must inevitably have plunged into the moving engine below. As it was, he escaped by the merest shave, and not altogether by his own efforts.

When he found himself going, he made a frantic grab at the railing—and missed!

The movement aided him, however, for it swerved his body toward the iron staircase, and his arm fell over the sloping guard rail when he was halfway down.

For a fraction of a second he hung there, hooked under the armpit, but not firmly enough to keep him up.

"Chick!" yelled Patsy.

Chick was close at hand, and there really was no occasion for Patsy to call.

Bracing themselves firmly on the iron steps, the two assistants reached for the helpless Rayne—one below and the other a little above—and together they held him there, just above the engine.

Up came the ponderous crank shaft, rhythmically and remorselessly, each time within a few inches of the dangling body.

"Gee! Can't you lift him a little?" panted Patsy. "If that chunk of steel ever hits him, it will knock him right out of our hands."

"Pull a little, and I can get the rail with my other hand," suggested Rayne, with desperate calmness.

The rascal had no lack of courage. Notwithstanding that he was literally within six inches of death each time the crank came up, he was able to figure out how he might escape—if only he could reach the iron railing.

"Wait till I count 'three,' Patsy," said Chick quietly. "Then, at the word, we'll pull together."

"All right! Go ahead!"

"One! Two! Three!"

At the third count, the two assistants heaved together, and up came the body of Rayne, so that both arms were over the railing.

A moment for breath, and then—the man was dragged over to safety, on the iron steps.

All the fight was out of him now. He lay quietly, gasping for breath.

"I was nearly gone, boys!" he breathed. "But—I guess my time hadn't come! Where's French?"

"French is in irons!" replied the rough voice of Captain Bill Lawton. "And according to what he says, you are as bad as he is."

"What do you mean?" demanded Rayne, with something of his usual insolence. "I don't know your man French."

"He says you do," rejoined the captain. "What's more, my first mate and bos'n back him up in that. I reckon I'll put you in the glory hole until we have a chance to investigate."

"But I am a passenger," protested Rayne angrily. "You have no right to put me in your prison."

"Thieves can be arrested on board a ship, just as they can anywhere else," put in Paul Clayton, who stood at the top of the stairs, the suit case in his hand.

"I don't know anything about the thievery," growled Captain Bill Lawton. "What I'm concerned in is the safety of this ship. You and French were in a conspiracy to blow it up, and for that he is in irons. You can explain, when you get ashore, to the proper authorities. On the *Cherokee*, I am judge, jury, and chief of police, and into the brig you go."

"In irons, captain!" put in Patsy. "You'd better. This fellow isn't to be trusted."

"Shut up!" roared Captain Lawton. "If I hear another word out of you, I'll put you there with him. Who gave you leave to speak?"

"Gee!" muttered Patsy. "I forgot I'm only a common sailor. The cap is the whole cheese, of course."

"What's that?" snapped Lawton.

"Nothing, sir," replied Patsy, with due humility. "I only sneezed."

"Grab him!" ordered Lawton, to three of the regular crew, who appeared by the side of Nick Carter and Clayton, at the head of the stairs.

Rayne had recovered himself by this time, and although he knew that on this steamer he could not hope to get out of the way long, if the captain had resolved to make him a prisoner, it was not in his nature to submit quietly.

He made a sudden bound up the stairs, knocked the scandalized captain to one side. He sent Clayton, suit case and all, flying in another. His object was to get to the hatchway.

"I guess not, Rayne!" said Nick Carter. "You'll have to take what's coming to you this time."

He thrust out a foot, and the Apache stumbled over it, headlong.

He was up in an instant, and as he hurled himself at the detective, he brought into play all the ferocity that was at the bottom of his nature.

But John Garrison Rayne was not himself. The awful experience through which he had just passed had weakened him, and he was not able to push his way past Nick Carter, as possibly he might have done otherwise, considering that he had taken everybody by surprise.

As it was, Nick caught him around the shoulders, pinning his arms to his sides. Then he nodded to one of the sailors, who had a pair of rough handcuffs.

"That's right! Shove 'em on!" ordered Captain Lawton. "I believe that fellow is worse than the other."

"What are you going to do with me?" shouted Rayne, losing all control of himself in his rage.

"Put you in a cabin, where you'll have to stay till we get to San Juan," replied the captain. "I have trouble enough on this ship, without being in fear that somebody is going to blow us up at any time. Take him away, men!"

The sailors dragged him, shrieking and cursing, to the place below decks, which was used as a prison, and which adjoined a similar cubby-hole where French was already confined.

Fifteen minutes later Paul Clayton was in his cabin, looking carefully through the jewelry in the suit case.

A tap came to the door. When it was opened, the bos'n, Sykes, stepped in.

"Did you find the jewelry all right, Mr. Clayton?"

"Yes. Everything is here. You will help me to send it back to my uncle, Mr. Reed, when we get to Porto Rico, won't you?" asked the young man earnestly.

"I certainly will," replied Nick Carter. "That is what I shipped on the *Cherokee* for."

"And won't you tell me just who you are?" begged Clayton.

"Not till we get back to New York," was the detective's smiling answer.

THE END.

"Stone walls do not a prison make," so sings a poet, and John Garrison Rayne was a firm believer in this little

couplet, as you will learn by reading "The Sultan's Pearls; or, Nick Carter's Porto Rico Trail," which will appear in the next issue, No. 143, of the NICK CARTER STORIES. There will be several other stories in the forthcoming number which will interest and entertain you.

Where's the Commandant?

By C. C. WADDELL.

(This interesting story was commenced in No. 140 of NICK CARTER STORIES. Back numbers can always be obtained from your news dealer or the publishers.)

CHAPTER VIII.

DOUBTFUL HOSPITALITY.

Fortunately, some one in the party about the automobile had sense enough to get the paper out of sight before Meredith caught a glimpse of it; and in her presence no allusion was made to the startling news. Whether Major Appleby would have been so considerate, is a question; but he and Hemingway had hurried off after fuller particulars; and the officers who remained were silenced by Mrs. Schilder's low warning.

Consequently, the girl was spared the added anxiety in regard to her father which the information would have been sure to cause her; and, having been assisted into the car, was driven rapidly away.

Grail, who had taken leave of her at the door of headquarters, watched her departure; but, beyond a slight, distant bow to Mrs. Schilder, bestowed no sign of recognition upon any of the group about the motor, nor did any of the officers seem to notice him. Calmly oblivious to them, he stood gazing after the car until it had disappeared from sight, then turned and went back inside.

A little flicker of admiration at his unbending attitude showed in Mrs. Schilder's dark eyes.

"What did he have to say, my dear?" She took Meredith's hand protectingly in her own as she leaned back against the cushions. "He denied the scandal, of course?"

"Yes, he denied it," assented the girl.

Mrs. Schilder's lips were compressed a trifle impatiently at the brevity of the answer. Naturally, she was curious to know what had occurred during the interview.

"But surely he gave you some further details, of the affair?" she urged.

Meredith shook her head. Grail had imposed no restrictions of secrecy upon her yet she felt, in a way that his revelations had been made in confidence; therefore, she evaded a direct reply.

"He told me that he had made his report to Major Appleby," she said. "Probably he meant that he had nothing more to say."

A baffled frown clouded the other woman's smooth brow. "Well, he seems to have taken quite a while to say very little," she commented, a hint of asperity in her voice. "You were there almost three-quarters of an hour."

"Oh, he naturally expressed his sympathy," Meredith explained, "and asked me a few questions about my trip out from Chicago. All that takes times, you know. Then, too, he tried to assure me that father would surely turn up very soon, and unharmed—just the sort of attempted consolation I get from every one. In short, for all the real information I gained as to father's whereabouts, I might as well have stayed away."

With the well-being or safety of the man for whom she cares at stake, the most artless woman will dissimulate so successfully as to impose on suspicion itself; and Mrs. Schilder, trained woman of the world though she was, was completely taken in by Meredith's air of forlorn discouragement.

"There, there, my dear." She soothingly patted the hand she held. "You have been so brave, you must not start to give way now. I know every thing seems blue and hopeless, worn out and tired as you are; but I can assure you the officers are not attempting to buoy you up with false hopes. They are really as optimistic as they appear. What you need, you poor little girl, is an opportunity to rest and get hold of yourself. Then you will begin to realize how little cause there is for any genuine apprehension.

She could not refrain, however, from asking one more question: "Do you gather that Captain Grail is bestirring himself at all in the search for your father?" she inquired carelessly.

Again Meredith yielded to that instinct toward subterfuge.

"Please don't speak to me any more of Captain Grail!" she burst out. "If, as he claims, these charges against him are false, why does he not get out and disprove them?"

Mrs. Schilder, a gleam of satisfaction in her dark, heavy-lidded eyes, deeming herself answered, asked no further questions. Indeed, there was scarcely any opportunity, for by this time the car had reached her handsome residence and, turning into the wide, tree-shaded grounds, it halted under the porte-cochère.

Throwing a supporting arm around the girl's trembling figure, Mrs. Schilder led her quickly to the luxurious room provided for her, and, ensconcing her in an easy-chair, turned her over to the ministrations of a trim maid, and discreetly left her to herself.

Shaken and distressed Meredith undoubtedly was by the ordeal through which she was passing, yet her interview with Ormsby Grail had left her in a far more sanguine mood than Mrs. Schilder suspected; and by the time she had enjoyed the luxury of a warm bath, changed to dressing gown and slippers, and had her hair let down and arranged by Marie's deft fingers, the little fit of nervousness which assailed her on entering the house had entirely passed.

She felt that with Grail bending every effort to a solution of the case, no more could be done, and she was willing to rely on him for a successful outcome. His simple assurance that her father would be restored had removed a burden of doubt and fear from her shoulders which Appleby's labored protestations had been unable to touch; Grail was an old friend, and she trusted him.

Mrs Schilder sent word by the maid that dinner would be served at seven-thirty, but Meredith asked to be excused, as she needed rest more than dinner, and she gave herself up to ease and quiet reflection.

Indeed, it was hard for her not to betray the sense of relief and security which had come to her to the watchful eyes of the maid, and she was glad when Marie, having laid out a dainty lunch on the table, took her leave. The girl's presence, in some way, gave her an uneasy feeling, and she had little doubt that everything she said and did

would be duly reported to the mistress of the house. Although Marie had explained that she would respond at once to a ring of the bell, Meredith did not summon her again even to remove the tray of dishes. Having made her preparations for the night unaided, she locked the door and crept into bed.

Shortly afterward she heard some one she supposed was Mrs. Schilder pause outside and softly knock; but she gave no sign, and in a moment or two the footsteps passed on. It was only a brief time before, worn out by the fatigue and strain of the day, she was actually asleep.

CHAPTER IX.

MIDNIGHT VISITORS.

Meredith did not know just how long she slept, but suddenly she roused up with a start, a sense of fearful misgiving strong upon her. The night light burning dimly at the head of her bed showed her there was nothing wrong in her apartment; nevertheless, her feeling of apprehension was not allayed.

A slight noise outside drew her to the window, and she peered searchingly out through a crevice in the blinds. The moon had long since set, and in the darkness she, at first, could see nothing; but as she continued to gaze, she finally discerned, by the aid of the street lamp on the corner, an automobile standing in the shadow of one of the trees which bordered the curb along the front of the lawn. At the same moment a light footfall below caught her attention, and she saw two men steal out from the side of the house and furtively cross the lawn toward the waiting car.

There had lately been a number of burglaries reported in the papers as the work of cracksmen who, in each instance, made their escape in an automobile; and immediately it flashed upon her mind that this was another episode of the same kind, and that she must lose no time in giving the alarm.

Stopping only to snatch up a loose kimono and wrap it around her, she tore open the door and hurried along the hallway. Her idea was to arouse the master of the house at once; but she was halted by the hasty opening of a door across the hall, and Mrs. Schilder stepped swiftly out to lay a restraining hand on her shoulder.

Despite the evident lateness of the hour, Mrs. Schilder was still in her dinner gown of flame-colored silk. She had not even removed the necklace of rubies from about her throat, or the glowing scarlet poppies from her shadowy hair. Indeed, as she stood there in the broad beam of light from the open doorway, she seemed intensely alert and awake. There was a sparkle in her dark eyes, a touch of unwonted color on her olive cheek.

"What is the matter?" she asked, a trifle peremptorily.

"Burglars!" gasped Meredith. "I saw them creeping away from the house just now—two men."

The other woman's glance narrowed; then she shook her head, with a low, noiseless laugh.

"You are nervous and overwrought, my child," she said. "I really should not have let you sleep alone."

"No," Meredith insisted excitedly. "I saw them, I tell you—a tall man and a shorter one! We must act quickly, or they will get away!"

"Hush! Not so loud!" Mrs. Schilder whispered sharply. "Those men you saw were not burglars, but associates of my husband in a deal he is putting through."

"Associates of your husband?" Meredith stared at her. "Why, then, should they skulk away like thieves, dodging behind the bushes and shrubbery as they crossed the lawn?"

"Ah, my dear, if you understood business affairs, you would realize that often the most guarded secrecy is required. If Mr. Schilder knew that even you were aware of the visit of those two men here to-night, he would be greatly put out; so you must never speak of it to anybody. It is, indeed, lucky that I was able to stop you before you could tell him what you had seen; although," she added, "you would not have found him in his room, as you expected. He is still downstairs in the library."

But as if to give the lie to her words, the door before which they were standing opened at that moment, and the foundry manager, with a dressing gown drawn hastily over his pajamas, his hair tousled, and his eyes heavy, as though he had just been awakened from sleep, stepped out.

At sight of each other, both husband and wife drew back, with an involuntary start, and Schilder quickly slipped into the side pocket of his coat something which he had been holding in his hand.

For what seemed a full minute not a word was spoken; but, as the silence continued, the sound of an automobile starting, just outside, was borne to their ears. They heard the pant of the motor; then, as the speeding car evidently turned the corner below them, the noise was lost.

Mrs. Schilder, seeming to recover herself, raised her head. "Why, Otto!" she exclaimed in German. "Where are you going?" At the same time she gave a tense clutch at the arm of the girl beside her, saying as plainly as in speech: "Be careful. Not a word to him!"

Schilder did not answer immediately. He still bent on her a sullen, challenging gaze, which she returned with a glare of defiance.

"Where am I going?" he finally repeated, in a guttural voice. "Why"—a baleful gleam smoldered in his eye—"there's been a stray dog hanging about the place for some time past, and it just happened to strike me that he might be here to-night. If so, I was going to get him." He withdrew his hand from his pocket to show the automatic pistol in his palm.

"Put that thing away!" his wife said sharply. "You will be frightening Miss Vedant, and she is sufficiently upset as it is."

Schilder promptly obeyed. "I beg your pardon, Miss Vedant." He lapsed once more into English, as he turned toward the trembling girl. "I was just explaining to my wife that there was a troublesome dog annoying us, which I had made up my mind to shoot. But"—he glanced again at the woman in red, with the glowing rubies about her throat—"there is no need to attempt anything of the kind now. I am satisfied that the cur has got away—this time."

He waved his hand as though to dismiss the subject, and took a step farther out into the hall.

"You are up late, Olga," he went on, a hint of deeper meaning under the seemingly careless question. "You should have been in bed hours ago."

She gave a slight shrug. "I have been reading," she explained, "one of those thrilling detective novels, you know, which one simply has to sit up to finish. Probably

I should still be deep in it, had I not heard Miss Vedant out here, and come out to investigate. However"—she simulated a yawn—"the spell is broken now, and I am going to bed. More than that"—she turned with a charming smile toward the girl—"I am going to take you with me, my dear. We will have no more of these panics and scares. You must sleep in my room, and let me look after you for the rest of the night."

With an almost mocking inclination of her head toward her husband, she threw her arm about Meredith to draw her back to the open door, while Schilder turned to re-enter his apartment. On the threshold he paused, and faced about again.

"By the way, I must tell you, Olga," he said, with a meaning smile, "that to-night I did not drink the nightcap you so kindly prepared for me."

"So?" she returned calmly, her hand resting on the knob. "That, no doubt, explains your restlessness and midnight prowling. It does not do to break in on established habits, Otto."

Inside her room, however, and with the door closed, her manner abruptly changed. Her face grew suddenly white, her black eyes dilated, and her hands clenched at her sides. For a minute her emotion was so uncontrollable that she seemed utterly oblivious to the wondering girl, who stood looking at her in questioning amazement.

CHAPTER X.

A SLEEPING DRAFT.

For only a minute did Mrs. Schilder yield to the storm of fury which swept her; then, conscious of Meredith's wondering gaze, she caught herself.

"I am like you, my dear"—she forced a smile to her pallid lips—"hysterical—not quite myself. Come! We both need something to quiet our nerves."

As she spoke, suiting the action to the word, she took from a cabinet on the wall a tiny vial, and carefully measured into a couple of glasses three or four drops of a white, milky fluid. Then, filling up the glasses with wine from a decanter on the table, she proffered one to the girl, and drained the other herself.

"Drink," she urged. "It is harmless."

But Meredith, mindful of Schilder's significant statement concerning his nightcap, merely toyed with her glass, and took opportunity, as soon as her companion's back was turned, to empty the contents into a near-by vase of flowers.

There could be no question, however, of the soothing effect of the draft. The color came back to Mrs. Schilder's lips and cheek; she recovered her poise.

"A creature of temperament like myself requires something of the kind," she explained, "and I was terribly upset by Otto's behavior to-night. He evidently suspected that you had become aware of the presence of his visitors, and was willing to go to any lengths to throw you off the track—even to pretending in so melodramatic a fashion that he was jealous of me. He did it well, I must admit," she conceded, with a judicial air, "but I shall certainly tell him that I don't care to be put in such a light for any cause. I think I had a perfect right to feel angry—don't you?"

She shot a side glance at Meredith out of the corner of her eye, as though to see how far this rather flimsy explanation would carry; but the latter had her features under excellent control, and gave no hint of her real opinion, further than to express the polite assurance that every one dislikes to be misjudged.

Privately she thought, however, that if Mr. Schilder had been merely acting his rôle of Othello, he could give valuable points on histrionic art to a Sothern or a Mantell.

She also made up her mind that she would stay no longer than that one night in a house where such a sinister undercurrent seemed to be at work. The first thing in the morning she would invent some excuse to take her to the home of one of the women out at the fort; or, failing in that, she would arrange to go to a hotel.

In the meantime, however, she felt that the less she had to listen to the hollow assertions of her hostess the better she would be pleased; therefore, she feigned, not with any special difficulty, an extreme weariness.

It acted like a charm. Mrs. Schilder, observing her stifled yawns, showed a quick compunction.

"You poor child!" she exclaimed. "I ought to be ashamed, keeping you up this way with my troubles, when you must be half dead for sleep. Get into the bed at once, and let me tuck you up 'comfy.' I myself shall do very well here on the couch tonight, and will have the light out for you in less than five minutes. It is so late now that I guess I shall not trouble to call Marie."

Good as her word, she carried out her program, overriding Meredith's protests that she herself should occupy the couch, and completing her preparations for retiring so rapidly that in less time than she had promised the lights were out and silence had settled down over the room.

As already indicated, Meredith's show of exhaustion had not been altogether put on; yet, tired as she really was, she found herself now unable to sleep.

In vain she counted imaginary sheep jumping over the fence, and resorted to every other expedient she could think of to woo slumber to her eyelids. Still she found herself wide awake, trying, unavoidably, to puzzle out an interpretation to the strange transactions she had witnessed. Meredith was not unduly curious, but it seemed to her that even the most phlegmatic person in the world could scarcely fail to raise some question in such an atmosphere of mystery and lies.

The activity, however, was all in her mind. She lay perfectly still, with her eyes closed, and breathing as easily and regularly as though in actual repose.

Mrs. Schilder, she supposed, had long since gone to sleep; but as the dawn broke, and a dim gray light began to steal through the windows, she discovered her mistake.

From the couch came a soft rustle as the bedclothes were carefully laid aside; then a faint, silvery chime broke upon the silence, evidently from a repeater watch being consulted. Meredith counted the strokes. It was a quarter to four o'clock.

Glancing out under her long lashes, she could see now that the other woman had raised up, and was sitting on the side of the couch, bending an attentive ear in her own direction, as if to make sure that she was fully asleep.

The girl, for what reason she could not exactly say, controlled an impulse to ask whether anything was wanted, and continued to sham unconsciousness.

Then, slowly and stealthily, Mrs. Schilder let herself down to the floor, and crept noiselessly across the room to lean over her.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NAME.

Meredith dared not look now, and it was all she could do to remain quiet under the searching scrutiny of those keen eyes; yet she managed to do it, for after what seemed an eternity of suspense, Mrs. Schilder gave a slight sigh of satisfaction, and, turning, made her way, in the same furtive manner that had characterized her throughout, over to the door. There came a smothered click to the lock; then, after another period of listening, the cautious, catlike footsteps died away down the hall.

Meredith sat up in bed and threw aside the counterpane. The inclination was strong upon her to follow, and learn the purpose of this mysterious mission; but as she swung her feet to the floor, and thrust them into the toes of her bedroom slippers, another consideration obtruded itself.

What right had she, a guest in the house, to spy on the movements of its mistress? And what excuse could she possibly offer, if detected at it? Clandestine and guarded though Mrs. Schilder's departure from the room appeared, it could be readily explained as some errand in housewifery, and all her precautions at silence attributed merely to a desire not to awaken her visitor.

She might disapprove the woman's conduct—indeed, she was shocked and disgusted beyond measure by what she had already learned—but she felt that she was not called upon to act as a judge in the case, nor was she on terms of sufficient intimacy to permit her making an appeal to the offender's better nature. The only thing that she could do with dignity, as she saw it, was to leave the house at the earliest opportunity, and that she had already decided on.

Accordingly, after a slight hesitation, she drew back into bed, and, with awakened scruples, strove not to indulge in speculations concerning either Mrs. Schilder or her affairs.

Nevertheless, it was hardly in human nature for her not to simulate sleep again, or to watch curiously from under her lowered lids, when a light footfall in the hall warned her of the other's return; and an instant later the woman entered the room.

Seemingly assured that Meredith must still be wrapped in slumber, as a result of the potion she had taken, or perhaps indifferent now as to whether this were so or not, she gave only a single glance toward the bed; then, with the door closed and bolted, she gave way to a sort of frenzy of uncontrolled emotion.

Up and down a narrow stretch of floor she paced, her hands pressed tight to her breast, her head thrown back, her face white and anguished, her eyes wide and black under their arched brows.

With her dark hair unconfined about her shoulders, her lithe, graceful figure in the black silk wrapper she had drawn around her, her gliding, noiseless step, and her air of fierce rebellion, she reminded Meredith of nothing so much as a black panther she had once seen in a zoo, sinuous, untamable, forever raving against the bars which held it in check.

Finally, however, the storm of passion, resentment, whatever it might be, to which she was yielding, spent itself, and, growing more calm, she ceased her agitated pacing to and fro. Again she had recourse to the tiny vial which she had so commended, carrying it to the window so as to see the amount that she was measuring, and taking, as Meredith observed, a larger dose than before.

She did not at once quaff the cup, though, but stood looking down from it to the bottle in her hand, with a strangely somber expression on her beautiful face.

Silently she stood, gazing out upon the fresh morning fairness of the world, with all its drama of reawakening life; for the rising sun was gilding the city now with its beams, and the sparrows were commencing to chirp and twitter in the treetops.

"I am taking a terrible risk," she murmured, "but I will carry it through, Ivan. I will carry it through for your sake."

Then, drinking off the potion she had prepared, she drew the heavy curtains at the window so as to completely exclude the daylight, and went back to her couch. Ten minutes later there existed no question but that she was sound asleep.

Not so, however, the unsuspected auditor of her soliloquy. If Meredith had been awake before, she was a hundredfold less inclined to slumber now.

"Ivan! Ivan!" her lips dumbly repeated over and over. Nor was it the fact that Mrs. Schilder had so tenderly apostrophized a name other than her husband's that thrilled and agitated her. It was the unmistakable revelation she had gained as to the nationality of the man thus invoked.

"A Russian!" she murmured to herself. "A Russian, evidently engaged upon some daring and hazardous enterprise!"

With a flash of recollection, she caught at another pregnant circumstance. Hitherto, she, and apparently every one else, had always taken Mrs. Schilder for a German, chiefly, perhaps, because her husband was one, and the two habitually spoke to each other in that language; yet Schilder had distinctly addressed his wife that night as Olga.

Olga! Strange that the name should have made no especial impression on her when she heard it. It was fully as significant to her now as the tenderly breathed Ivan; for Meredith knew the Slavic capability of devotion to a cause or an ideal. With those "children of ice and fire" there are no lengths—danger, disgrace, even death itself—which they will not chance.

How Meredith railed at herself for the punctilious scruples which had prevented her from following the figure of her hostess on that mysterious mission down the darkened hall.

TO BE CONTINUED.

A QUEER LITTLE MESSENGER.

Two burglars who had been caught and put into prison managed to send notes to one another by a little beetle. Their cells joined each other, and there was a little crack which led under the wall between them. One of the prisoners noticed a beetle going down this crack, and wondering whether it led to his comrade's cell, he caught the insect and fastened a note to one of its wings. Then he put it into the crack, and sure enough it made its way to the next cell. The other prisoner noticed the piece of paper tied to its wing, and, after reading the note, sent back an answer. The prisoners fed the beetle

every day, and it soon became quite accustomed to running from one cell to the other with a piece of paper tied on to it. They made plans to escape in this way, but one day a jailer saw the beetle and read the note it carried, and was able to put a stop to their plans.

HOW AN ORANG-UTAN TRAVELS.

It is a most interesting sight to watch an orang-utan make its way through the jungle. It walks slowly along the larger branches in a semierect attitude, this being apparently caused by the length of its arms and the shortness of its legs. It invariably selects those branches which intermingle with those of a neighboring tree, on approaching which it stretches out its long arm, and grasping the boughs opposite, seems first to shake them, as if to test their strength, and then deliberately swings itself across to the next branch, which it walks along, as before. It does not jump or spring, as monkeys usually do, and never appears to hurry itself unless some real danger presents. Yet, in spite of its apparently slow movements, it gets along far quicker than a person running through the forest beneath.

USEFUL PARROTS.

Parrots have been taught to amuse by their imitation of the human voice, and now their powers in this respect have been made use of for a practical purpose. At almost every station on a German railway the station master has a parrot or a starling, so trained that whenever a train draws up at the platform, it commences calling out the name of the station most distinctly, and not only this, but it continues doing so while the train remains there. This has been found an excellent mode of informing the passengers where they are.

KISSING A JUDGE.

In one of the New Orleans courts, a negro was called as a witness. The judge, noted for his austerity, held out the book, and the witness was sworn, being expected, of course to kiss the book. But he was unused to criminal proceedings.

"Why don't you kiss?" demanded the judge.

"Sar?"

"Ain't you going to kiss?" again asked the judge.

"Sar?" repeated the astonished negro.

"Kiss, I tell you!" roared the judge.

"Yes, sar! yes, sar!" exclaimed the frightened black.

The long arms of the negro were promptly thrown round the judicial neck, and a kiss was imprinted upon the judge's face instead of the book.

POISONED.

A tall "cullud gemman" entered in a state of great distress.

He held one hand over the middle button of his vest, dropped heavily into a chair, and gasped, in agonized, excited tones:

"Oh, doctah, doctah, gib me er anecdote ter pizen, or er aromatic ter kill pizen! Some one's done dozed me fo' suah!"

The druggist adjusted his spectacles, and looked closely at the darky.

"What have you been eating?"

"Oh, nuffin', doctah—nuffin'. I had er hunk er watermillion, an' er few slices er cowcumber, an' er peach or two, an' den I went out fer s'm' ice cream I was dat young lady. After I'd swallered dè ice cream I was dat cramped dat I looked like a double bow knot. An' when I'd had er little lobster salad I knowed by de feelin' dat de watermillion had be'n pizened fo' suah. Oh, doctah, gib me sumfin, quick!"

BIG VERSUS LITTLE.

The little men nearly always thrash the big ones in storybooks, but in the following story the big man bested the little fellow. The little man entered a cable car and walked to a seat at the forward end. The big man's feet were a good size, and the little man stepped on them somewhat viciously.

"Why don't you keep your feet to yourself?" said he, after walking on the pedal property of the big man.

"If you don't like my feet, accept my hand," said the big man, and he offered it to him—on the left cheek—with a report that sounded as if a boiler explosion had taken place.

There was a big rumpus, and the little man dropped off "to look for a policeman." He did not return, and the big man rode on without a word.

TURNING THE JOKE.

An Irishman chanced to be present at a jumping match, and seeming much interested in the contest, was invited to try his skill. He gladly consented, and taking off his long black coat, laid it on a fence near by. Three dandies, who had just halted to witness the sport, thought it was a good chance to play him a trick. Accordingly, when his back was turned, one of them procured a piece of chalk and drew an ass' head on the back of Pat's coat, and waited to see the fun when he found out the trick. He soon returned for his coat, with a smile beaming on his comic face. As his keen eyes glanced at the drawing on the back of his coat, one of the dandies laughingly asked him how he liked jumping.

"Oh, I like jumpin' well enough," said Pat; "but iv ye'll tell me which av ye had the chalk on yere face, an' left the print ov yere jaw on my coat, I'll tell ye if he took a gud likeness."

A GOOD BID.

The auction room was crowded, and the collection of furniture, art, and bric-a-brac being unusually choice, the bidding had been very spirited. During an interval of the sale a man with a pale and agitated countenance pushed his way to the auctioneer's side and engaged him in a whispered conversation. Presently he stood aside, and the auctioneer called attention with his little hammer.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, in a loud voice, "I have to inform you that a gentleman present has lost his pocketbook containing two hundred dollars. He offers twenty-five dollars for its return."

Instantly a small man in the background sprang upon a chair, and cried excitedly:

"I'll give fifty dollars!"

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Lee Ling You Weds Au Toy Yuet.

Lee Ling You drew the scarlet veil of heavy silk from the face of his bride, Au Toy Yuet, at midnight, and beheld her for the first time in twelve years. A sip of wine and a formal bow made them man and wife, according to Chinese custom. Lee Ling You is twenty years old and Au Toy Yuet is nineteen.

In Boston, when Au Toy Yuet dressed for her bridal journey, she was swathed in many folds of scarlet silk. From head to foot her veil covered her. She could not see through it, and none could see her. She was led to a big touring car and carefully deposited on the rear seat. All alone, and without a glimpse of the country-side through which she passed, she was whisked to New York's Chinatown. Her father, Ah Yuet Chung, head of the Boston Supply Company, and her mother followed in another car.

The automobiles drew up in front of 39 Mott Street about eight o'clock in the evening. With low obeisances Lee Yik You, president of the Chinese Relief Association, welcomed his future daughter-in-law and her parents. She was conducted to an upper room. Within a few minutes the bridegroom knocked at her door and paid his respects to the veiled figure.

At midnight, relatives of both families, clad in ceremonial robes, gathered in a large room on the third floor. The bride, still swathed and blindfolded by her gorgeous veil, was led in by her parents, and Lee Ling You took his place at her side.

Ten men formed a circle about them, their loose robes forming a wall through which the guests could catch no glimpse of bride and bridegroom. In unison the ten chanted the prayer for wedded bliss. At its conclusion they stepped aside, and Lee Ling You snatched the heavy silk from the face of Au Toy Yuet. His father offered the young man a goblet of wine. He passed it to Au Toy Yuet, who sipped daintily. Lee Ling You touched his lips to the goblet and returned it to his father.

Au Toy Yuet bobbed her sleek head at Lee Ling You, and he solemnly ducked his own. The wedding guests pressed forward with good wishes on their lips. Au Toy Yuet and Lee Ling You were married.

Twelve years ago Au Toy Yuet and Lee Ling You lived with their parents in Canton. Their homes were about two miles apart, but the two children, seven and eight years old, were playmates. It was a gala day when their parents exchanged visits.

Of a sudden there were no more visits. Lee Ling You and his parents had sailed for America. In the new land Lee Ling You thought often of his playmate in Canton. A few months ago, when he became a member of the senior class at Stuyvesant High School, he conferred with his father as to his marriage. There was no one, said Lee Ling You, whom he would rather marry than Au Toy Yuet, if she could be found.

The wishes of an elder son carry weight with the head of a Chinese family. Cable messages were sent to Canton. It was learned that Au Toy Yuet and her parents had also come to this country. It was not long before Lee Ling You knew that his playmate was in Boston. The rest was easy.

Later Doctor Henry, of the Chinatown Mission, married them according to the customs of their adopted land.

Funny Stories Restore Voice.

Laughter provoked by a funny story has resulted in restoration of the voice of Charles Kateza, of Allentown, Pa., who had been speechless for two years. About four years ago Kateza lost his sight and hearing temporarily in an accident in an iron foundry. These functions were restored by medical treatment, but when he recovered, he was without power of speech.

He was undergoing treatment in Mercer Hospital. A fellow patient told him a funny story, and Kateza indulged in unusually hearty and prolonged laughter. During the night he dreamed of the yarn, and his nurse found him repeating the story in his sleep. Since then Kateza's speech has been normal, and the hospital physicians believe it to be permanently restored.

Father Wins, Son Loses; Allies to Miss Recruit.

For five months Francis Bartram Towle, eighteen years old, of Larchmont, N. Y., has been in the French trenches near Craonelle, hoping that the efforts of his father and the state department at Washington would fail to obtain his discharge.

The father, Captain George S. Towle, of the Seventh Regiment, of New York, learned that the young man had been transferred to the English flying squadron. He was informed at the Seventh Armory that the British war office had been induced to consent to his discharge and that he would return home soon. Captain Towle wants to put the boy in West Point.

Francis, or Bartram, as his father and mother call him, is a private in Company F, his father's command in the Seventh. His brother, Ellingwood, twenty-two, is a corporal. Both young men started for Europe August 7th, as soon as they could obtain passage after the war started.

"They had my consent to go with the allied forces—note the distinction—not into them," said Captain Towle.

The boys found the French army officials did not recognize any distinction, and that if they were to see any of the fighting it would have to be as fighte[illegible]ordingly they enlisted in the Foreign Legi[illegible]onderful pound their father heard what they had [illegible]alytic manipulation, Toulouse, drilling with the recr[illegible] the raisins, a wonder-was injured. [illegible] cake, exposed for sale

He was in the hospital six [illegible] Mattinio, was found by charged. He went to Paris, joi[illegible] of Philadelphia, Pa., to lance Hospital service, and is [illegible] parents have many pictures wh[illegible] shows the headquarters occupied during his advance on Paris.

Meanwhile Bartram finished his drill[illegible]ow, and [illegible] was sent to Chalons. He was later tra[illegible] and Craonne, and later to Craonelle, w[illegible] Legion lost heavily in the fighting. He

however, and at one time when his father was making every effort to obtain his discharge, wrote that he was having the time of his life and weighed 169 pounds.

Captain Towle soon found the best solution of the problem he could hope for would be the transfer of Bartram to the English service. If this could be done, he felt that the chances of getting the boy back to the United States would be improved. At the same time his son met an English aviator, and although life in the trenches was not unsatisfactory, began to yearn for a taste of that branch of the service. On his own initiative he arranged the transfer, and became an air mechanic.

Steps taken to complete the solution of the problem as soon as Bartram was enlisted under the British flag were successful, even while Captain Towle was congratulating himself that his son was at least one lap nearer home. Now that it is certain that the boy will soon be on his way, his father will try to arrange the details for his admission to West Point. He had an appointment with the class that matriculated in March.

Fillingwood will probably remain in France all summer. There are four younger children in the Larchmont home, not yet of fighting age. Captain Towle is a city surveyor. He laughed as he told what obstacles he had found to his attempt to get Bartram out of the army.

"I finally wrote to his commanding officer, asking his influence. The only thing he said in his reply was that he had been considering a recommendation for the promotion of Bartram."

Romantic Turn to Civil War Tragedy.

'After shooting her father, a captain in the Confederate army, on the bloody battlefield of Chancellorsville, and rescuing a little girl from a burning homestead on the edge of the smoke-smudged field, Emmet A. Bishop, eighty-one years old, a Civil War veteran, has married Mrs. H. Skiles-Simpson, aged fifty-four, the daughter of the man he shot and the little girl he rescued from the flames fifty years ago.

They met for the first time since the battle in a store in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., where the Widow Simpson gave her name to a clerk to have her purchases charged to her account. Bishop, standing near by, recalled the name "Skiles" as that of the tot he had rescued over half a century ago. He spoke to Mrs. Simpson out of courtesy and found that it was the little girl he had really rescued. The result was a short courtship, which ended [illegible] the aged veteran escorted the comely widow [illegible] long of the marriage-license clerk and thence to the judge's face in[illegible]

[illegible] was born in Wayne County, Pa. [illegible]rn regiment at the outset for the [illegible] Pace in Maryland. At the battle

A tall "cullud gemma[illegible] heavy fighting, Bishop's com- distress. [illegible] and he, with several comrades,

He held one hand over[illegible] pedition to surrounding hamlets dropped heavily into a [illegible]es from the real scene of battle, cried tones:

"Oh, doctah, doctah, [illegible]des saw a house in flames. It was [illegible] an aromatic ter kill [illegible]omes with rambling gables peculiar [illegible] south!" [illegible]tebellum days.

The druggist [illegible]menting on the episode, said: "We in- [illegible]at the darky. [illegible]ound that the house had been fired in some way and decided that we might as well collect any articles we could save. So we entered the house and found the little girl lying across a big bed, overcome with smoke."

"Yes, and I was pretty near gone," remarked Mrs. Bishop, who was fondly watching her aged husband while he was telling the story of years gone by.

Bishop, while he was carrying the little girl to safety, asked her where her parents were.

"Papa is over there. He's a soger, and he wears these kind of straps," the little tot replied, as she pulled from her apron pocket the shoulder straps of a captain in the Confederate army.

One of Bishop's comrades recognized the numerals and insigna that was worn by a captain in the regiment against which the Northern men were pitted. Bishop took the little girl over to the Confederate hospital, under a flag of truce.

He was astounded to find that the little tot's father was the man he had shot and killed only a few days before while on picket duty. The little girl was turned over to people living in the vicinity. That was the last Bishop saw of her, although he carried her name, written hastily, on a scrap of paper for a long time.

The widow always gave her name as Mrs. H. Skiles-Simpson. When Bishop dropped into the Wilkes-Barre store to buy a few necessities, he heard the word Skiles. He asked the woman if she had any relatives in Maryland. She answered in the affirmative. Then the story of the little girl's escape and other events of that time, told by the aged veteran, brought forth repeated exclamations from Mrs. Skiles-Simpson.

"I always remembered the young man who rescued me, because he looked so big and strong in his blue uniform," she said to the clerk.

Mrs. Skiles' first husband died February 18, 1882, and Bishop's first wife July 9, 1881. Bishop is a retired carriage maker and lives at 1605 Nau Aug Avenue, Scranton. They will make their home in Mr. Bishop's house near Nau Aug Park.

Obtains Work for 1,245.

First reports of the operation of the Federal Employment Bureau, inaugurated recently by the Department of Labor in coöperation with the agricultural and post-office departments, show that during February and March 1,245 persons obtained work through the government agents. Officials said that although statistics showing the character of employment had not yet been compiled, it was evident that a large majority had been taken from the city to the farm.

Dives Twenty Feet to Save Mine.

Diving into twenty feet of muddy water in a mining shaft in Nevada City, to prevent the mine from being flooded was the feat of James Proctor, former surf guard at Santa Monica. The discovery was made that the pump of the Major Gravel Mine was not working and that the drifts were rapidly filling with water. It was ascertained that a valve, twenty feet under water, had become clogged.

Proctor, who is connected with the management, volunteered to dive to the bottom, and did so, releasing the

valve and saving the mine from great damage. Proctor dove in ordinary clothes, and remained beneath the surface about one minute.

Motor Cycle Street Sweeper.

The latest use of the motor cycle is for street sweeping. The new machine is mounted on a side-car frame of peculiar design; a steel brush loosens and breaks up the dirt so that the revolving broom that follows can easily remove it. The broom is raised and lowered by a handle at the left of the driver's seat, and when in contact with the pavement revolves like the brush in the ordinary carpet sweeper. The new street sweeper is designed for use on asphalt or wooden-block pavements.

300,000 Names on Petition.

On his way to Philadelphia, Leslie Dietz, son of John Dietz, who for five years defended Cameron Dam, in Wisconsin, from the Chippewa Lumber Company, stopped in Coatesville, Pa., for a day. He is seeking signers, and already has 300,000 on a petition which he will present to have his father pardoned.

John Dietz was captured in 1910, after holding back sheriffs and posses, and was convicted of first-degree murder. In January last Governor McGovern changed his sentence to imprisonment for life. In the battle in defense of the dam, Dietz had two sons killed, his mother received a bullet that caused her to go insane, and a sister and brother were wounded.

Young Dietz expects to obtain names of prominent men in Philadelphia.

Candy Made Child Blind.

After being blind for several days because of the glucose in some candy she ate, little Gene Drapkin, of 149 Clinton Avenue, Brooklyn, three years old, sees again.

Recently the child ate some candy, and shortly afterward her mother found her groping about the house, complaining of the dark. Three physicians agreed that glucose in the candy had affected the optic nerves, and could hold out no promise of returned sight. She was taken to the Brooklyn Eye and Ear Hospital.

After five days of treatment, while her mother was sitting beside her bed, Gene's sight returned as strangely and quickly as it had gone.

Her Cup of Coffee Runs Away.

A woman entered one of New York's automatic lunch rooms the other afternoon, appearing much preoccupied. After changing a dime for two nickels, she put one of them in the slot marked "sandwiches," and the other in the hot-coffee slot.

She turned the crank, as per directions, and then gave a series of panic-stricken staccato shrieks of "Oh, oh, oh!—look!" The other auto eaters turned in time to see that she had forgotten to put a cup under the faucet, hence the dismay. All of the brownish liquid had filtered down into the drain.

Hunter's Shot Kicks Back.

Sydney Farrington, a wealthy rancher, near San José, Cal., was knocked "cold" by a duck which he shot in South Bay, according to a story vouched for by other members of the Huntington Club, of which Farrington is a member.

Farrington took a shot at a pair of high-flying birds. With the first barrel he killed duck number one. He turned quickly to bang away at duck number two, and as he ran his eye along the gun barrel, number one fell squarely on the back of his neck. Farrington was "out" for several seconds, but was none the worse for the experience.

Pig That is Almost Twins.

A freak pig born on the farm of William Andrew, near Federalsburg, Pa., has two perfectly formed heads, three eyes, two tails, and eight feet. It is exciting much curiosity in that section.

Prohibit Liquor in Homes.

The iron and steel mills, which include Worth Brothers Company and the Lukens Iron and Steel Company, of Coatesville, Pa., have prohibited their employees who live in the firms' houses from having whisky, beer, or any other intoxicating drink delivered to their homes.

Sad Mistake in Drug Store.

A young woman entered Alexander Weed's drug store, in Gaylord, Mich., and asked him if it were possible to disguise castor oil. "It's horrid stuff to take, you know, ugh!" said the young lady, with a shudder.

"Why, certainly," said Mr. Weed, and just then, as another young lady was taking some soda water, Mr. Weed asked her if she wouldn't have some, too. After drinking it, the young lady lingered a moment and finally observed: "Now, tell me, Mr. Weed, how would you disguise castor oil?"

"Why, miss, I just gave you some——"

"My gracious me," exclaimed the young lady. "I wanted it for my little brother!"

Roller Skates Jitney Rival.

Medford, Ore., has a rival to the jitney bus which promises to revolutionize transportation in the Rogue River Valley. The rival is the roller skates.

Several girls organized a roller-skating party to Central Point, and the affair was such a success that another excursion to Ashland is planned. Meanwhile orders for highway skates have swamped local dealers, and individuals are propelling themselves along the Pacific Highway every day at a pace which makes the old motor service look like a catboat in a Pacific calm.

This Cake is Not All Dough.

Recently the professor told us about a wonderful pound of raisins that came under his analytic manipulation, but this time it is cake, and, like the raisins, a wonderful cake. A piece cut from this cake, exposed for sale in front of the store of Antonio Mattinio, was found by Professor Charles H. la Wall, of Philadelphia, Pa., to contain:

Sand and coal dust.
Disintegrated bran fragments.
Human hair.
Wood fragments, black and yellow.
Cotton fibers—white, black, blue, yellow, and green.
Linen fibers—white, green, and violet.
Straw, partly disintegrated.

Disintegrated vegetable matter, similar to that observed in fertilizer.

Cobwebs.

Pine wood and other wood fragments.

Paper fragments.

Iron-rust fragments.

Professor Ia Wall, who is chemist for the State Dairy & Food Commission, read off the list in testifying against Mattinio at a hearing before Magistrate Rooney. The storekeeper was held in $400 bail for court.

Whisky Boast Proves Fatal.

John Pellen, of New Philadelphia, Pa., was found lying dead in a gutter from the effects of drinking too much whisky.

Pellen had been on a spree for several days, and when remonstrated with he boasted that he would drink a quart of whisky before the day was over. The condition of his body indicated that Pellen had been lying in the gutter several hours before being found.

Farmer Cuts Down a Tree.

A farmer cutting down a tree, three miles south of Appleton, Wis., did more damage to the Wisconsin Traction, Light & Power Company than any storm the road has ever encountered.

The tree fell across the interurban wire, breaking down fifty poles and lowering a mile of wire. When traffic was resumed, passengers had to walk a mile in transferring past the wreckage.

Convict Refuses Pardon.

Preferring death in prison at Atlanta, Ga., to freedom without vindication, Bose Taylor, convicted on a murder charge, for which he has served twenty-six years of a life sentence, has declined Governor Slaton's offer of a pardon.

"I wasn't guilty of murder, and I deserve a new trial," he told the governor. "If I can't get that, I would rather stay here at the prison farm. I have been here twenty-six years, and there is work to do and people to see. I'd rather stay here than be on the outside. Still, I'd like very well to be freed by trial to show I wasn't guilty."

But that was more than the governor could grant him.

Looters Sent to Church.

Three young men—Lewis Jones, Clyde Trempler, and his brother, Allen Trempler, were convicted at Rockport, Ind., of having looted a drug store in that town. As they had never been in trouble before, Judge R. E. Roberts suspended sentence on condition that they would never smoke cigarettes again, would remain out of saloons and "blind tigers" and would attend Sunday school at least once a week.

The men promised to obey the order, and started in the following Sunday by attending Sunday school in their home town, remaining for the church services.

Skipper Stops Leak; He's Fat; Saves Ship.

Captain H. Sooey recently saved his steam fishing boat, the *Frank Summers*, by his own exertions. Bound from Tuckerton, N. J., to Rhode Island, the boat sprung a leak opposite Thirty-fourth Street, New York City. The police attribute the gash in her bow to "some sharp instrument."

Skipper Sooey was at the wheel. The cook and crew were asleep. In vain the skipper shouted. The cook and crew slept on. The East River gurgled joyfully into the *Frank Summers*. Leaving the cook and crew to sleep in peace, Captain Sooey lashed his wheel, rigged up a flare, reversed his engine, threw coal under the boiler, and planted himself in the gaping hole in the bow of his ship.

Fortunately for the good ship *Frank Summers*, the cook and crew and the skipper, too, Captain Sooey's anatomy was admirably adapted for leak stopping. The East River was foiled, though the skipper's trousers got good and wet. Stern first and sagging slowly as the captain's plumpness yielded to the water, the *Frank Summers* chugged on her way . At intervals the captain bawled hoarsely, hoping that if the cook and crew did not hear him, some passing vessel might. There was no answer.

Off the foot of East Tenth Street the skipper pried himself loose from the leak and ran to the wheel. He twisted it enough to bring the boat into the slip. Policemen nailed planks where Captain Sooey had been.

German Banquet Held in Brussels.

A unique medical congress was held recently in Brussels. In times of peace it is the custom of the surgeons of Germany to hold an annual meeting for the purpose of scientific discussion in some German city. Inasmuch as most of these surgeons are engaged in military duty, the congress met this year at Brussels. The experiences of the surgeons under war conditions were thoroughly discussed.

The congress came to an end with a banquet attended by Governor General von Bissing, who made a patriotic speech.

Baby Escapes Like a Rocket.

The infant son of Mrs. Guy Scott was the only member of a party of six to escape injury when an automobile in which they were riding on the Washington-Hampton Road, near Cowell's Corner, N. J., ran into an embankment and overturned.

The baby, who is nine months old, was torn from his mother's arms and thrown fifty feet and over a fence. He landed in a field, right side up, and began at once to yell lustily for his mother.

Four of the others were pinned beneath the car and injured. Mrs. Scott, who was thrown clear of the car, suffered from minor bruises and shock.

"Spite-fence Jim" Loses Home.

James W. Allgor, known in Seabright, N. J., as "Spite-fence Jim," because he abused the wealthy persons living near him by enormous signs on his fence has been put upon the street. He was evicted from the house where he had held forth so long, and his eviction was brought about by the last man whom he had reviled, Mayor George W. Elliott, of Seabright.

Allgor, who was in the midst of a colony of wealthy persons, got the idea that he was losing business because his neighbors would not allow their servants to patronize his place. He built a spite fence and ornamented it with painted abuse of men and women of standing. He was

put in jail twice because of his attacks. His property was worth about twenty thousand dollars, but it was sold off in parcels.

His most recent attacks were upon Mayor Elliott. The mayor bought in the last of the Allgor property, and served notice that the family must move. The family separated, and, while Allgor was in New York, the mayor had all his belongings removed to the street. He has moved to a small shack.

Bluebirds Nest in Mail Box.

Eleven bluebirds have been hatched in an ordinary wooden mail box fastened near the front door of the home of Edward van Tak, an engineer on the Pere Marquette Railroad, living in Holland, Mich.

Several months ago a bluebird built a nest in the receptacle, and six little ones were later found in the box. Later a second nest was built, and five more birds were hatched. With the opening of spring the bluebirds have again spotted the box, and it is expected that another nest will soon be built for a third hatching.

In the meantime the postman is watching the box, which, if occupied by the birds, will be closed for the deposit of mail.

Pioneer Woman Dies on Ranch.

Mrs. Matha Timson, eighty-two years old, a Colorado pioneer and a former Denver resident, died a few days ago at her home on a ranch near Watkins, Col. She had been ill only three days, suffering from a general breakdown.

Mrs. Timson came to Colorado with her first husband in 1860, driving across the plains with an ox team. In 1865 her husband went out on the prairie and never returned. He was supposed to have been killed by Indians. In 1884 she married again. She lived in Denver from 1865 to 1880.

Mrs. Timson had lived for many years on a ranch near Watkins. Two daughters and two sons survive her. They are Mrs. Charles Morris, Mrs. G. C. Hart, and Frank C. Timson, all of Denver, and Louis Timson, of Watkins.

Old Man's Whisker's Ablaze.

Sparks from the pipe which John Q. Robertson, aged eighty-two, was smoking beside the kitchen stove at his home, in Waltham, Mass., ignited his long white beard and he was so terribly burned that he died in the Waltham Hospital.

Mr. Robertson was very proud of his beard, and when he saw the fire in it, he became excited and rushed out on the front piazza. A heavy wind spread the little burst of fire, and soon his clothing was ablaze. His wife, who is nearly as old as he, heard his cries and ran to him. They extinguished the fire, but his face, head, arms, and body had been badly burned. One of the floor boards on the piazza had caught fire, but the neighbors put out the blaze.

Was a Fine-looking Cow, Too.

Rosh Hosanah, a butcher of Amite City, La., killed an especially fine-looking cow for his Sunday patrons, and in the stomach of the animal he found the following articles:

Five pounds of nails.

One box of fishhooks.

More than fifteen pounds of gravel.

The remains of two bedspreads.

A railroad ticket—canceled—to New Orleans.

The cow had a penchant for hanging around the Hosanah back yard on washing day, which is about the only reasonable explanation for the bedspreads.

This Lamb Has an Extra Leg.

There was recently born on the farm of John Swanson, near Foraker, Okla., a lamb with five legs, the extra one hanging between the two front ones. The lamb is lively and seems to be doing well.

Baby in River is Plump Rooster.

In New Jersey a man and woman crossed the Little Ferry bridge over the Hackensack River the other evening, the man carrying a bag, which he handled in a rather suspicious manner. As Mrs. Joseph Guy, the wife of the tollgate keeper, approached the couple, something in the bag stirred and made a noise which sounded like the cry of an infant. Mrs. Guy's exclamation of surprise so startled the man that he threw the bag into the river. With his companion he then fled.

In a few minutes the Little Ferry and Ridgefield Park police departments were at the bridge, together with a score of citizens.

After many hours of dragging, the bag was hooked and hauled to the surface. Sure enough, there was something inside of it, about the size of a well-developed baby; but when a knife was produced and the bag was ripped open it was found to contain a ten-pound Wyandotte rooster.

Now the mystery is: Why did the man throw such a plump rooster overboard?

Quaker Kept Two Sabbaths.

Reverend Isaac Maris, aged eighty-two, the man who kept two Sundays, is dead in Nortonville, Kan. He was a Quaker, the last survivor of a colony of Quakers who settled here in 1857. About that time a group of Seventh-day Baptists settled near by, and a girl of that faith, Alma Buten, became Reverend Maris' bride in 1858. The Reverend Pardee Butler, of border-war fame, performed the marriage ceremony.

Because of his wife's faith, the Quaker preacher observed Saturday as the Sabbath, and his own demanded Sunday worship. In spite of keeping two Sabbaths, Reverend Maris prospered, becoming wealthy.

Killed Rescuing Pet Kitten.

Moved by the sufferings of a kitten which had strayed to the roof of his office and could not find its way down, Lemuel Rothwell, of Philadelphia, Pa., sacrificed his life in the attempt to save his pet from starvation. Rothwell plunged to his death through a skylight in his fruit-and-oyster establishment, where he had climbed with a bottle of milk to feed the animal. He fractured his skull. His wife, bookkeeper at the establishment, witnessed his fall to death.

In the office below, John Finnegan, a partner of Rothwell, was seated at his desk when he heard the crash of

the skylight, and a moment later Rothwell's body struck the floor a short distance from him. Rothwell was aged about fifty-five years.

First Boy Scout Brass Band.

The first Boy Scout band of the United States, a Lewistown, Pa., organization, that has become famous, expects to get a trip to the Pan-American Exposition before it closes.

A popular song, "In Dear Old Frisco," written by H. H. Hain, a rising song writer, has been dedicated to this organization. This band has filled engagements in some of the principal cities of the United States.

Bull with Only Three Legs.

A bull owned by Sherman Book, near York, Pa., certainly got the short end of the deal when it was born. Instead of having the full number of pedal extremities, it has only three.

The bull is full grown, and, strange to say, appears to get along as well as one with four legs. The animal is perfectly normal in appearance except when it walks; then it develops a gait between that of a kangaroo and a dromedary.

4,352 Autos to Allies.

The American automobile has been most popular with the Allies. A total of 4,352 commercial automobiles have been purchased by England, France, and Russia in Europe and Asia in the seven months ended February 28th. The value is placed at $12,365,943, an average of $2,841 for each automobile.

The greatest number of these automobiles were sold to France—2,277—valued at $6,317,150, being exported in the first seven months of the war. England is second, with 1,559, valued at $4,030,261. Russia in Europe bought 305, valued at $1,280,187, and Russia in Asia 211, valued at $738,345.

Plays Tuba Twenty-seven Hours; Then Had Thirty-four Seidels.

Lambærtus Johannes de Jung, of New York City, says he is the champion tuba player of the world. He plays the big horn in the band of the Holland-America liner *Potsdam*. Lambærtus says he won the championship about a year ago in a contest at Rotterdam with Rintje Vouterinus, also a celebrated Holland tubist.

In this contest De Jung played for twenty-seven hours continuously, easily outdistancing his competitor, who blew himself out at something over twenty-three hours. After this long period of playing, Lambærtus said he was not particularly tired but very thirsty, and had thirty-four seidels, which was also a record it was said, even for Rotterdam.

From constant playing the lung power of Lambærtus has developed to such an extent that he often has to run around the deck several hours before playing. Otherwise he says the tremendous pressure might blow the lining out of the tuba. When steam is low in the boilers, he is often called upon to blow the *Potsdam's* whistle. This is especially helpful in a fog, economizing on steam.

Lambærtus hails from Leyden, and has been an expert on the tuba ever since he can remember, as his father was before him. He has many decorations, and is also barrel shaped to a great extent, as tuba players often become, according to Doctor Taft, the ship's surgeon. This makes him an expert wrestler. He has played the *Potsdam* in and out of Hoboken for six years.

Picks Pocket of Chief of "Dip" Squad in Court.

Detective Frank Casassa, of New York City, had his pocket picked. The full importance of this will be evident to those who know that Casassa is in charge of the pickpocket squad and that he has done more than any other detective of late years to keep the hands of many "dips" out of mischief.

The man who caused the detective to lose his smile for half an hour was a friend who was piqued at Casassa's habit of playfully abstracting valuables from the pockets of acquaintances, just to show them how far they would be at the mercy of the light-fingered gentry if they didn't have capable detectives like Casassa and others to protect them.

After the detective in the Criminal Courts Building presented to his friend a watch which the friend thought was safely stowed in his pocket, the latter swore revenge. Five minutes later he lifted from Casassa's inside pocket his gloves, handkerchief, and some memoranda which the detective was waiting to use in a case in special session, and walked off with them without disturbing the detective's narrative of his capture of an expert "gun."

A moment later Casassa discovered his loss and wondered if he really looked like an easy mark. He enlisted the aid of half a dozen other detectives in a search for the articles, but despite his skill in recovering the property of other persons, he was unable to find his own. Finally a lawyer's clerk approached and handed him the "swag."

"With the compliments of the man who borrowed them," said the clerk. "And he hopes you won't pick on him any more."

Unearths Fortune in Old Spanish Treasure.

A fortune in old Spanish gold and precious jewels has been unearthed by Major E. C. Lewis, a well-known resident of Nashville, Tenn., on his estate on Jupiter Island, Fla. The treasure is valued at more than $40,000, and is thought to be one of the many chests hidden by the notorious Captain Kidd or some other old-time pirate during operations in the West Indies.

Major Lewis says he was having a place excavated for a swimming pool for his children when the ancient chest containing the glittering treasure was found and lifted from the place where it had rested since the exciting days of the Spanish Main.

A number of small treasures have been unearthed from time to time in the neighborhood of Major Lewis' place.

Jupiter Island, where Major Lewis' place is located, is about sixteen miles long, but very narrow, and is about twenty-five miles north of Palm Beach, Fla.

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